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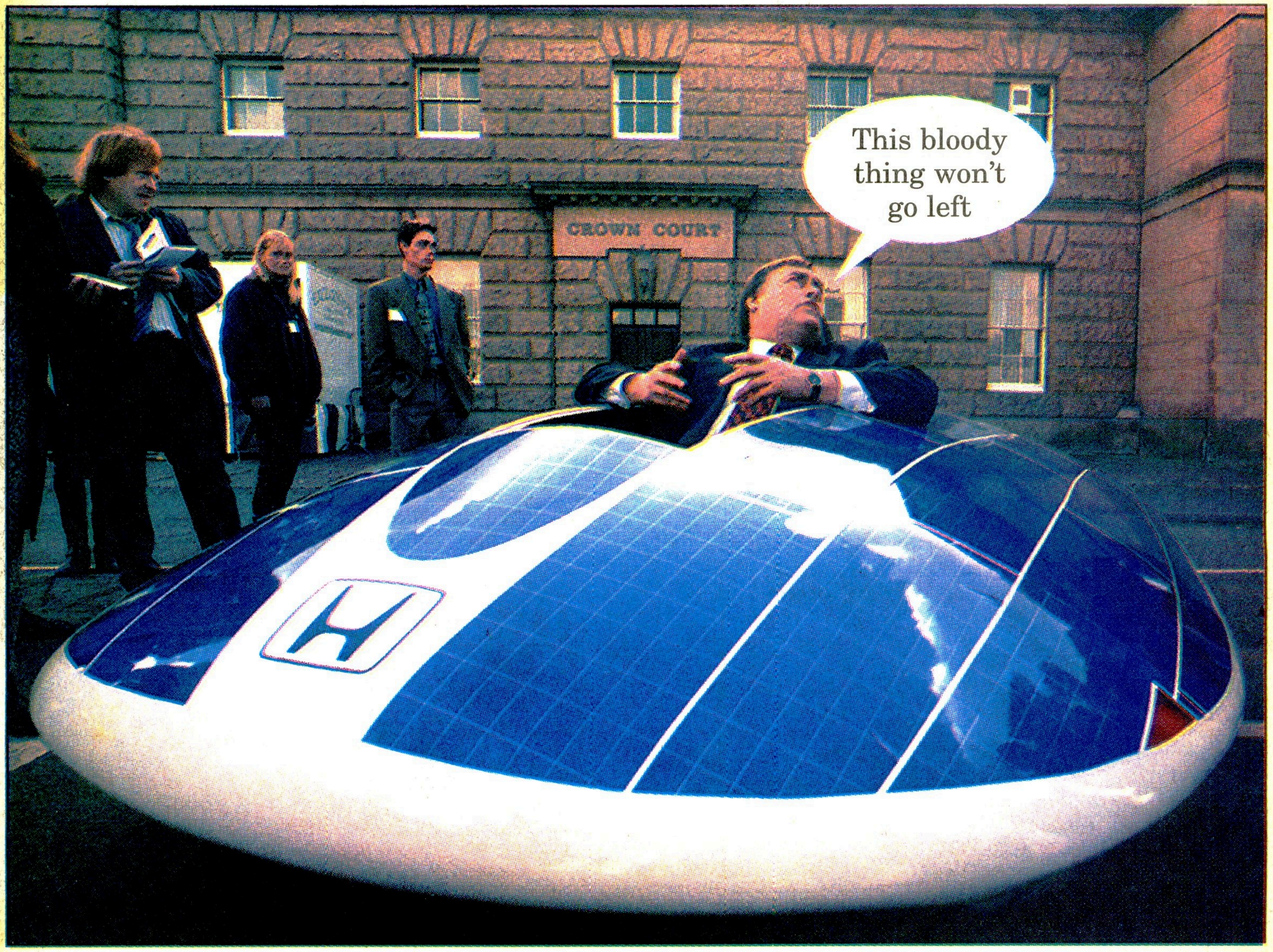

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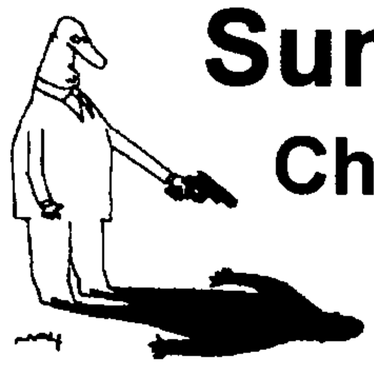

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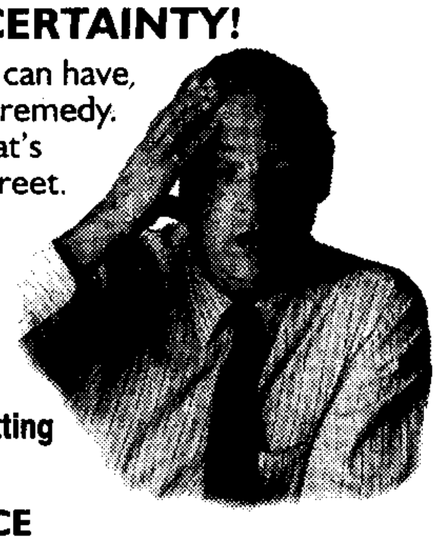

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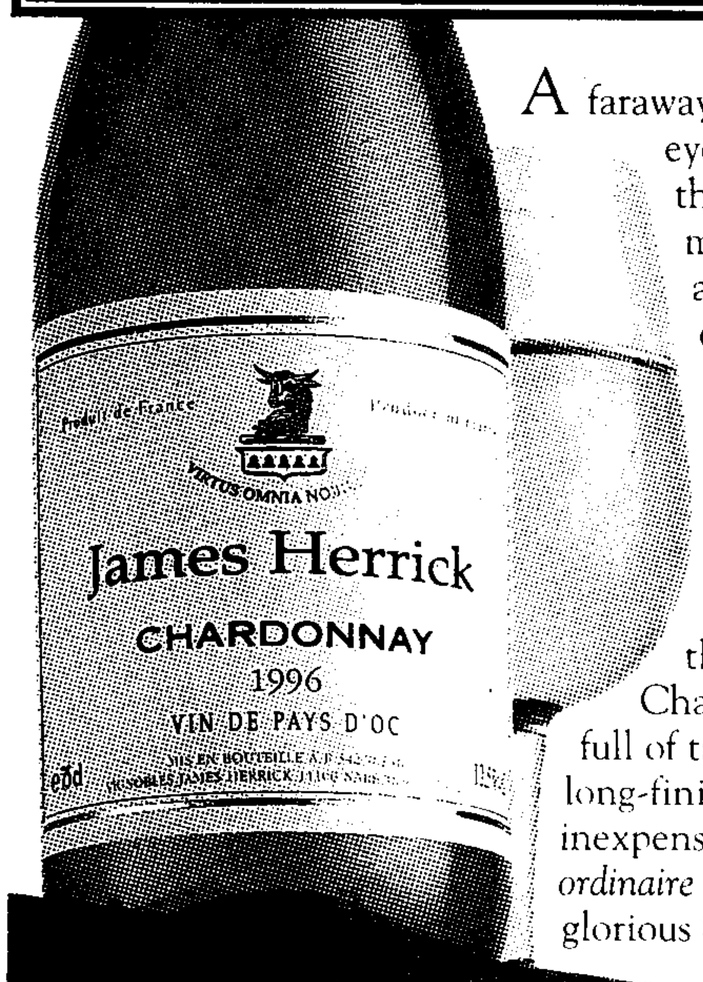

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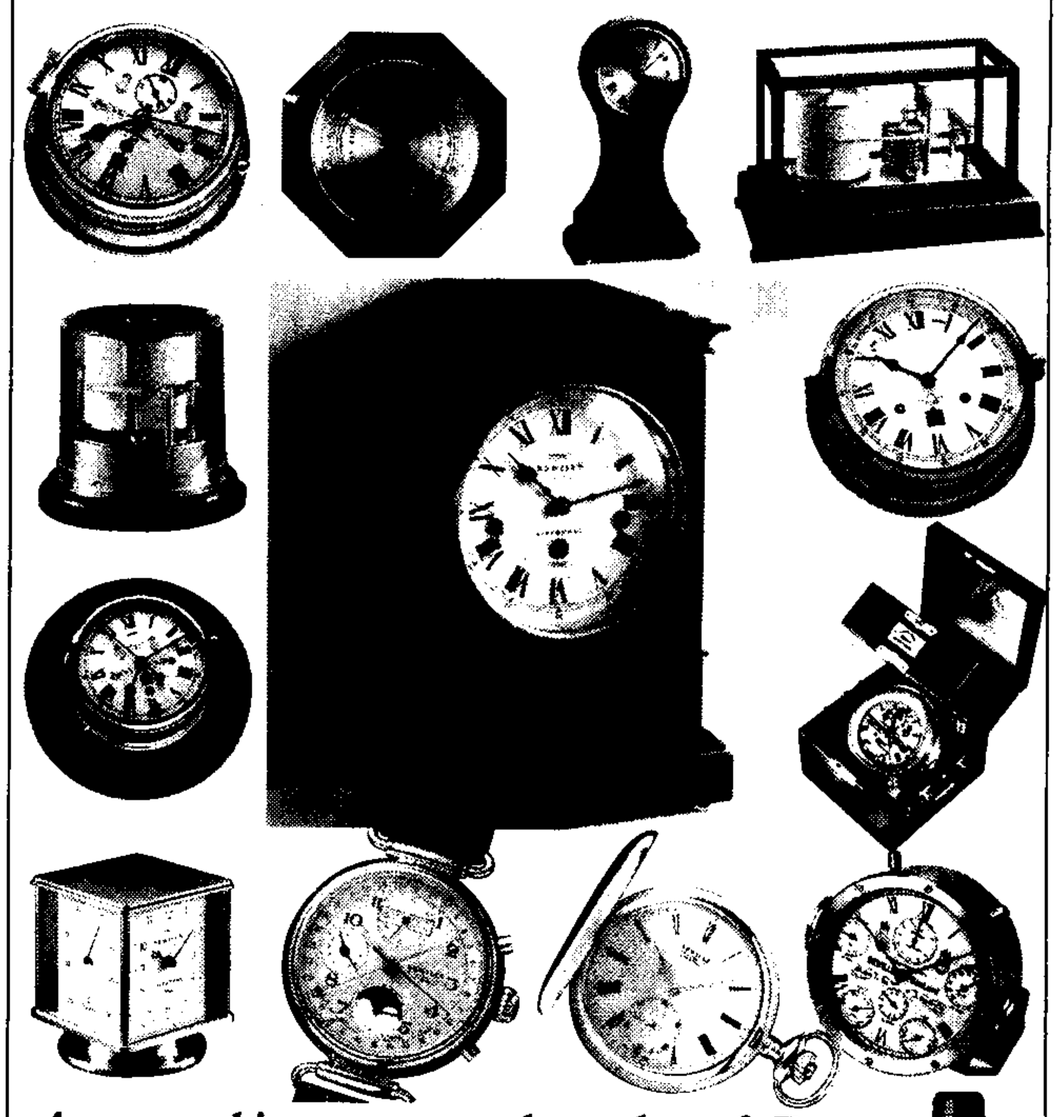

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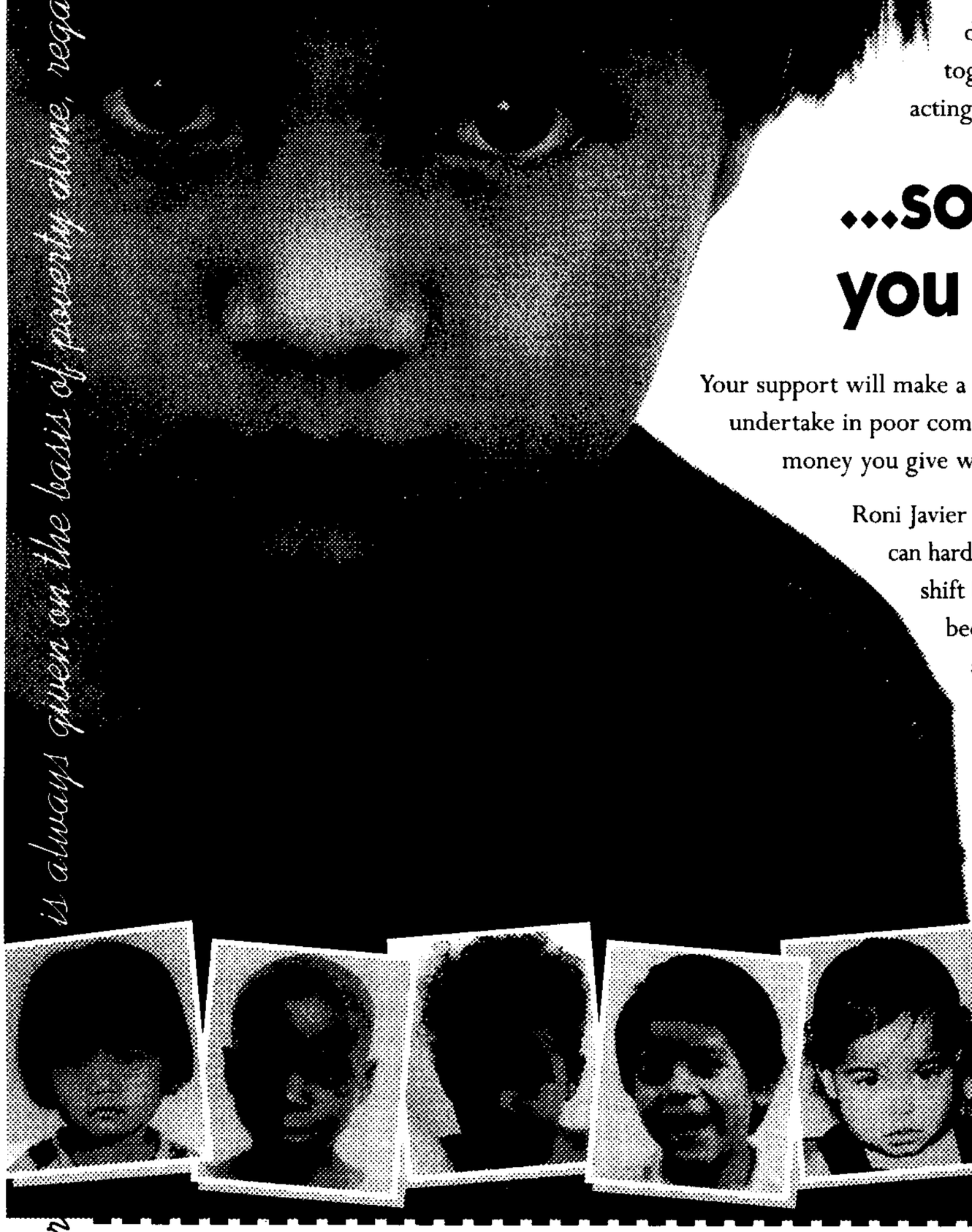
By tonight, another 35,000 children will be lost through hunger, and disease...



It's almost unbelievable, yet every day 35,000 children in developing countries die from malnutrition and preventable diseases. That's more than 24 every minute!

The cause for most of this terrible suffering is poverty. Without enough food, clothing and medical care, let alone a proper education, the future for a child born in poverty is often tragically short. Many die from hunger and disease. Millions more face a daily struggle simply to survive.

Yet all it takes is £15 a month to sponsor a child, bringing real hope into their life and giving both them and their community the chance of a decent future.

It may seem insignificant to sponsor just one of so many desperately needy children, but by doing so you will join together with the many thousands of other like-minded people acting as sponsors through Christian Children's Fund.

...so why do we ask you to help just one?

Your support will make a priceless contribution towards the vital work that we undertake in poor communities around the world. We guarantee that 80% of the money you give will go directly to help a child and their community.

Roni Javier pictured here, lives with his mother in the Honduras, in what can hardly be called a house. It has a straw roof, a dirt floor and a make-shift hearth for cooking. There is no sanitation and Roni has often been ill and undernourished. Now Roni has a sponsor we are able to work constantly to see to his health and development. The more sponsors we can find, the more children like Roni can be helped to a safer and brighter future.

Somewhere, this very minute a child is waiting to be sponsored by you. Please don't delay - you will make a huge difference to more than just one life.

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APOLOGY

Mr Robin Cook

IN common with other newspapers Private Eye inadvertently described the garment worn at his nuptials by Mr Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, as "an anorak".

We have been informed by lawyers acting for the Foreign Office that the garment in question was a very expensive green car coat purchased from the prestigious high street quality fashion clothing suppliers Millets for the sum of £17.99 (originally at £21.99 and reduced in sale).

We would like to apologise to Mr Cook for this appalling error and the obvious distress caused to him, his wife, the Labour party and the government.

We have therefore, in the light of this shocking libel on one of the country's most stylish and popular public figures (Beardman of the Year 1994), agreed to donate a substantial amount of money to Mr Cook's favourite charity — AA (Anoraks Anonymous).

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COLOUR SECTION

IN THE TEAROOM

AS "new" Labour celebrates a year in office everyone is agreed it's been a great year for Formula One, a good year for Rupert Murdoch and not at all bad for the stock market. But what about the workers?

The manifesto commitment to bring "fairness" to the workplace by scrapping the nastier, more mean-minded bits of the Thatcherite anti-trade union laws has not been one pursued with any urgency or enthusiasm. Worse still, senior ministers have been tipping the wink to employers' organisations that Tony Blair was set to resile from the few undertakings he'd given the TUC in return for the millions of pounds they shelled out for his election victory.

Since early autumn last year union bosses have been trying to state their case, but these days beer and sandwiches are no longer available at Number 10. So excluded were they that for a period desperate hopes hung on Ken Cameron, leader of the Fire Brigades Union, on the shaky grounds that since he employed the wife of Gordon Brown's mouthpiece, Charlie Whelan, he might be able to wangle some access.

It didn't work. Would no one stand up for workers' rights? Step forward... deputy PM John Prescott. Anxious not to be branded an unreconstructed old Labourite, he's spent Year Zero being super-careful about which fights he picked and with whom. But Prescott was genuinely moved by what he heard — especially by reports of a favourite employers' scam highlighted by the Magnet Kitchens dispute: if a company wants to downsize or simply replace a costly, mature workforce with cheap twentysomethings, it can save on redundancy payments by provoking employees into going on strike and then simply sacking them.

Prescott popped round for a bi-lateral with the boss. Naturally, Blair treated him to his Oslo lecture on the benefits of "Labour-market flexibility", the need to attract footloose multinationals, etc. But Big John hit back saying it was plain daft to throw people out of work today in the hope that the Koreans, when and if they sort their own economy out, might one day invest here. At which Blair gave him that frightened-rabbit-caught-in-the-headlights look which is a sure sign he's suddenly realised that everything he's been saying for the past few minutes is complete bollocks.

And so the PM has promised to look at the matter again. Prescott is worried though that the modernizing courtiers will try to rally the *Daily Mail*-reading classes against him. Hence those weekend interviews stressing his loyalty and the fact he never, ever wants to be prime minister himself.

'Urquhart'

AS THEY prepare to deal with deadly uranium waste from Georgia at the reprocessing and waste plant at Dounreay in the far north of Scotland, the British nuclear authorities must be hoping that publicity about Dounreay's safety will be confined as usual to the *John O'Groats Journal* and the *Caithness Courier*.

On 7 April 1995, the *John O'Groats Journal* exposed a confidential report by RM Consultants that drums of radioactive waste from all over Britain had been dumped down an unlined shaft at Dounreay and that some drums were leaking. The *Journal* also revealed "hot spots" of dangerously high levels of radiation in the local landscape and seashore (see *Eye* of 5 May 1995).

On 29 November 1995, the *Caithness Courier* reported that two men repackaging radioactive waste from rotten drums for a private sub-contractor at Dounreay had been contaminated by inhaling radioactive dust. The following week the number of contaminated workers rose to four.

In the same month the Tory government handed most of the running of Dounreay to one of its favourite civil engineering companies, W.S. Atkins. At the same time the radiation inspections were taken on by the newly-privatised AEA Technology. Both contracts are still in place under "new" Labour, so whatever happens with the dumping of the Georgian waste someone will make a profit out of it.

THE minister without portfolio Peter Mandelson may be the king of spin, but his own image is in dire straits.

Evidence comes from the Scottish borders, where Susan Rae, an economic development officer and member of Unison, is being taken before a disciplinary hearing for comparing a personnel officer, Diane Hunter, to Mr Mandelson.

The *Local Government Chronicle* reports that Rae's "insults" were made on an e-mail to a colleague in which she asked if Hunter, introducing a flexi-time package, "had been taking lessons from Peter Mandelson".

The council decided this amounted to an allegation of misconduct because the comparison was "likely to cause personal offence to any reasonable person".

WHAT has foreign secretary Robin Cook been doing, apart from getting married in a "car coat"?

Wonks excited by the launch of the Foreign Policy Centre, a think-tank set up to circumvent mandarins at the FO, were looking forward to a major speech at the end of March at which he would outline his "vision for a foreign policy for the new millennium..."

The speech is now tentatively pencilled in for the end of May. The popular view at the Foreign Office is that the whole think-tank scheme was foisted on Cook by Blair. Cook's own line is that of course the FO are fine but he wants the additional input of businessmen, academics and non-governmental officers. Translation: Cook's embarrassed at how often the Sir Humphreys succeed in talking him out of his "ethical" ideas and he needs extra help making them stick. Watch out for the speech...

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"We'll have to work together – to destroy this Peace Agreement"

AS PART of its loud campaign against the Northern Irish peace agreement, the *Daily Telegraph* **last week filled two whole pages with photos of the 299 RUC officers murdered since 1969 — to illustrate "the human cost of the fight against terror".**

The caption below one picture, of Det. Insp. Peter Flanagan, noted merely that he was killed in 1974 "by IRA". Wisely, it neglected to add that the IRA man responsible was Sean O'Callaghan — who is now very friendly with Charles Moore and a regular contributor to the *Daily Telegraph*!

***INDEPENDENT on Sunday* hacks were in mourning on Saturday for former editor Rosie Boycott.**

Some wandered forlornly into her office — empty save for her two and a half foot cannabis plant, which in her haste to get off to edit the *Express* she had forgotten.

The plant was on the windowsill, shrivelled through lack of watering, and the hacks debated whether to send it on to her at United Newspapers where she is sure to want to continue her "Legalise Cannabis" campaign. In the end apathy sunk in and the hacks harvested it instead.

As for Boycott, when she paid her first visit to the *Express*, accompanied by a TV crew and retinue of flunkies, political pundit Peter Oborne wasted no time before starting the arslikhan. Dashing across the editorial floor, he offered his new editor a vigorous handshake: "Peter Oborne, at your service! Great to have you aboard, Rosie."

The recipient of his greeting looked puzzled. "Er, actually, *this* is Rosie," she explained, gesturing at the blonde standing beside her, whom Oborne had ignored. "I'm Julia Hobsbawm, her PR woman."

Elsewhere in the building it was being said that ousted *Express* editor Richard Addis had "no advance warning" of his abrupt sacking by milord Bollick last week. Not so. As the *Eye* reported as long ago as last June: "One wonders how much longer *Express* owner Lord Hollick will tolerate [Richard] Addis's eccentricities. It seems that Addis has been wondering, too. Talking to a friend recently, he seemed to be already contemplating his early retirement. 'I'm told you can live very comfortably in Greece on £10,000 a year,' he mused."

Such parsimony won't be necessary. During his two years at the helm, Addis has collected more than £320,000 in salary; and he has now been given another £400,000 to go away, which is probably enough to buy one of the smaller Greek islands outright. Treble retsinas all round!

TURMOIL at the *Scotsman*, where three-packs-a-day editor Martin Clarke is packing his fags for the journey to Glasgow where he is taking over the helm of the Scottish *Daily Record*.

In doing so he has missed the latest move by the *Scotsman*'s secretive owners, the Channel Isles-based Barclay twins who have finally managed to strip the paper of its prime asset. Not the journalistic talent, but its grandiose premises on North Bridge, which are destined to become yet another hotel.

ON 16 April the *Mirror* ran a large front-page blurb for an eight-page souvenir. "Free inside," it promised. "The *Mirror*'s original dramatic edition reporting the sinking of the Titanic."

Millions of readers turned to the facsimile copy of the *Daily Mirror* dated 16 April 1912, eager to read the graphic story of how the unsinkable ship had sunk with great loss of life. A day later the *Mirror* boasted that its facsimile issue had "won praise throughout Britain". One reader was quoted as saying: "It brought home how incredible the sinking of the liner was."

Incredible indeed, seeing that the 1912 edition did not report it. "Every one on board world's greatest liner safe after collision with iceberg in Atlantic Ocean", ran the headline above a story revealing that "every soul was safe and that the vessel itself was proceeding to Halifax (Nova Scotia), towed by the Allan liner Virginian".

TWO days after sending him a crate of champagne to celebrate his *Press Gazette* commendation as interviewer of the year, *Telegraph* editor Charles Moore told his New York bureau chief Charles Lawrence that he was fired. No redundancy; no pension; be gone.

"Shome mishtake, surely?" queried Lawrence, and saner counsels prevailed. A few weeks later Moore's press release announced his appointment as US feature writer and Lawrence walked off with a handsome settlement and freelance contract.

The original excuse was that a previous employee had snaffled $1,000 worth of cheques intended for New York taxes, but since it was Lawrence who'd discovered the diversion, the punishment seemed both unmerited and harsh for an amount equivalent to the average hack's lunch expense voucher. In fact Stephen Robinson, the ambitious new foreign editor who dresses to the right, suspected leather-jacketed Lawrence of being a crypto leftist and wanted to make sure the *Telegraph*'s foreign news pages were as loonoid as its editorials. He'll probably succeed — but proprietor Conrad Black will have to pay for his purge.

THE *Spectator* has come up with a novel way to deal with the post-prandial excesses of its burly and bibulous political correspondent, Bruce "Brute" Anderson: he has been banned from attending the office after 3pm.

The last straw was a recent lunch after which Brute lurched into the office of Kimberley Fortier, the mag's luscious publisher. "What you need, Kimberley, is a damned good fuck," he informed her — adding, with uncharacteristic modesty, "but I'm not sure that I'm the right man for the job."

Knowing that Brute's appetite for sex is exceeded only by his insatiable thirst, Fortier distracted him by mentioning that a case of champagne needed to be carried up to the top floor. Brute duly obliged, and as soon as he was in the upstairs room she locked the door.

Moments later she heard the all-clear signal for which she had been waiting — the familiar thud of Brute falling to the floor as he collapsed into a deep and dreamless coma.

"I don't think that helps, do you, Mr Kemp?"

NEW research published in February suggested that repetitive strain injury (RSI) *is* a genuine disease. Even the conservative *Lancet* used the headline "Repetitive strain injury is real, it's official".

Most of the major broadsheets covered the story in depth but the *Financial Times* relegated it to their news in brief column. A week on, *FT* readers finally discovered more thanks to hack Michael Peel, who decided "the research on office workers has come no closer to establishing the causes of RSI. It does not show that working long hours at a keyboard causes the condition".

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapists took a completely different tack. It backed the report in a press release written by CSP spokesperson Jeff Boyling — who also happens to be ergonomics consultant for the *FT* but was not used by his paper to comment on the case.

PS: The RSI compensation cases being brought by the NUJ on behalf of five *Financial Times* journalists begins on 2 June.

ACCOUNTANTS at Farringdon Road have been horrified to learn that the *Observer* is on target to lose £10m this year for its owners, the Guardian Media Group. But *Guardian* managing editor Brian Whitaker, executive in charge of paperclips and expenses, is equal to the cost-cutting challenge.

In one recent memo he announced that hacks who have to stay in hotels while away on business can no longer order a copy of the *Grauniad* and charge it to their bill. Anyone submitting an expense claim with the telltale item will be forced to repay the grand sum of 45p — which should solve the problem of the *Observer*'s losses.

Whitaker has also been resisting demands from *Grauniad* and *Observer* staff at the Commons for a new fax machine. Ever since their old one conked out several years ago, the hacks have been borrowing a fax belonging to the *Yorkshire Post*'s lobby correspondent, with whom they share an office. But when *Grauniad* political editor Michael White asked for a replacement, Whitaker said he would authorise it only if the *Post* contributed £100 towards the cost.

In a fury White and three colleagues wrote out cheques for £25 each, which they sent to Whitaker as a satirical gesture. The humourless bean-counter promptly cashed the cheques, thus enabling the *Observer* to stay in business for another five precious minutes.

COULD the sudden sacking of the *Sunday Mirror*'s dour Geordie sports editor Bill Bradshaw be in any way related to a bizarre request from his old quaffing partner, freelance sports hack Alasdair Ross?

Days before Bradshaw got the boot from acting editor Colin Myler he had approved a demand from Ross — his third — for more money to be wired to him in the West Indies where he was covering the latest England cricketing debacle for the *Sunday Mirror*.

Alas when the claim arrived on the desk of managing editor Pat Pilton he at least noticed that Ross's latest request for more readies had come from Grenada — where England had not been playing — a week *after* the end of the tour.

FASHION victims who rely on the *Sunday Times* to know what is in and what is out must be very confused.

In the magazine hack Dylan Jones tells them that Bedford Cords are firmly "in" but Evisu jeans are definitely "out".

In the Style section, meanwhile, a whole page is devoted to denim, headed "So what jeans should you be wearing?". Apparently, "Evisu — the best ain't cheap and the recent adoption of Evisu by Mancunian icon Ian Brown will ensure its continuing crossover appeal this summer". And the hack responsible for this different view? Er, Dylan Jones.

MAX "Hitler" Hastings, editor of the London *Evening Standard*, likes to see plenty of posh babes working on his papers, and statuesque brunette Molly Watson, latest recruit to the "Londoner's Diary", fits the bill.

Alas, Watson soon discovered that journalism, as Alan Watneys has remarked, can be a rough old trade. One of her first assignments was to take Sir Robin Day for lunch at Simpson's in the Strand. All went well until dessert, when Watson was surprised to find the distinguished broadcaster clutching her thigh beneath her skirt and inquiring: "Do you have room for something else in there, my dear?"

Arriving back at the office in some distress, Watson blurted out what had happened — and was merely laughed at for not having slept with the old lech in the cause of getting a better story.

POOR Lady Olga Maitland, former Tory MP for Sutton and Cheam and pro-nuclear war campaigner. The ex-MP has been reduced to plying her old trade as a gossip hack and has been seen doing the party circuit on behalf of the *Daily Mail*'s Ephraim Hardcastle column. No doubt she thinks back wistfully to the pre-sleaze, old Labour days when a recently unemployed Tory MP could sidle easily into a fat directorship — but such times are no more.

POLICE 5

HOW is the government going to "reform" the Royal Ulster Constabulary?

Drastic change in the constitution of the RUC, which is (at least) 92 percent Protestant, is an integral part of the peace agreement. But it seems almost impossible in the teeth of opposition from all the unionist parties in Northern Ireland, supported in Britain by the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* in full cry.

Northern Ireland secretary Mo Mowlam has a plan, however, and for once the treasury and Gordon Brown will not begrudge the funds to finance it. No less than £1.4bn has already been set aside to make the agreement work. A large slice of this will be spent on vast pay-offs for policemen.

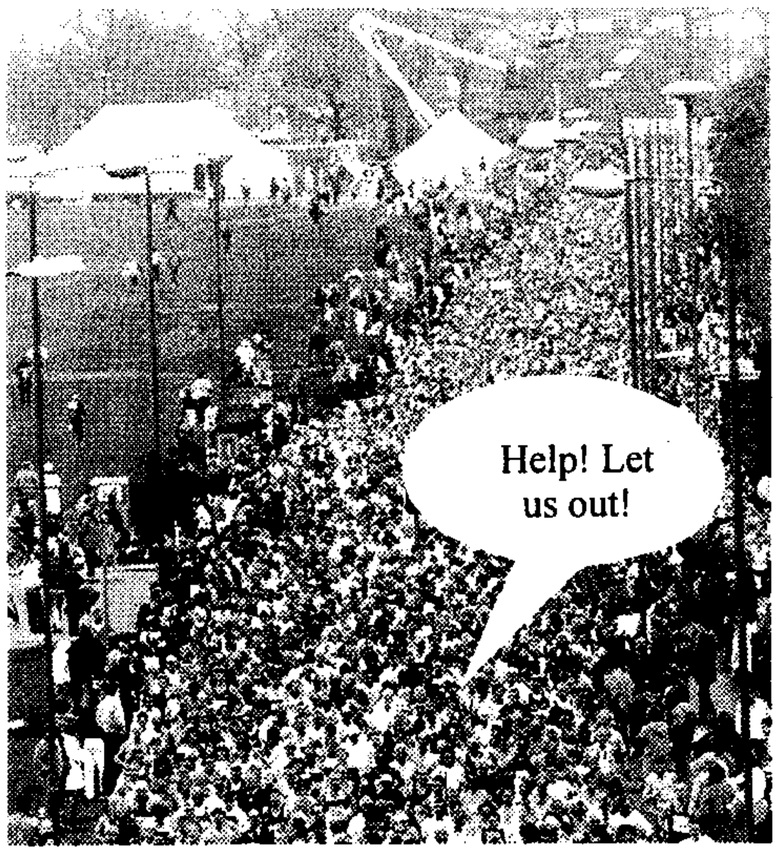
There will be one big payment available on instant retirement to all officers regardless of age or service, and this will be topped up by other benefits such as "enhanced pensions" to anyone over 45. While the money is on offer a big propaganda campaign will insist that the RUC as constituted is far too big for a peaceful country, as Northern Ireland will obviously soon be, and should be drastically (though humanely and generously) pruned. A mass acceptance of these astonishingly generous terms is widely forecast. It will be followed by a recruitment policy based on "positive discrimination" (ie: only Catholics need apply).

THE furore surrounding Ian Oliver, deeply unpopular chief constable of Grampian police, is not the only controversy facing the force.

Two Scottish Nationalist councillors from Aberdeen were arrested and charged with expenses fraud a week before the Scott Simpson murder inquiry report which blew Oliver's reputation out of the water. One of the councillors was Brian Topping, a member of the Grampian police board, who moved for Oliver's dismissal when he was exposed by the *Scottish Sun* being affectionate with a married woman who was not his wife.

Charges relate to a total of less than £200 for each of them. Both men were detained in their houses at 7.30am by senior detectives. In high profile political cases like those of Jonathan Aitken or Mohamed Sarwar, the accused are allowed to report to police rather than be woken up and arrested in their pyjamas. A complaint had apparently been made about the men by an anonymous source.

YES, IT'S ARCHER FOR LONDON!!



The race is on

HACKWATCH

A NATION MOURNS

NOW that Linda McCartney has joined the Princess of Wales in the holy company of saints, newspapers are telling us how much they revered her compassion and commonsense. As with St Diana, however, they somehow forgot to mention this while she was still alive...

3 December 1983: "Ex-Beatle Paul McCartney's wife has sent a Christmas hamper to the Greenham peace women," the *Sun* reports indignantly. "And as fury mounted yesterday over the £100 gift, Santa *Sun* stepped in with 10 hampers for the bobbies who guard the US base." MPs praise the *Sun*'s generosity, and condemn Linda as "very insensitive".

19 January 1984: "Linda, 41, has always been a mystery," notes a *Mirror* profile. "Outsiders say she is cold, calculating and bossy... Others say she is a talentless hanger-on who preys on her husband's name... No matter what people say about her, Linda McCartney will keep going her own way." For she is indeed her own woman — "if nothing else".

25 January 1984: Linda McCartney's conviction for cannabis-smuggling provokes a huge front-page headline in the *Daily Star*: "POTTY LINDA".

22 February 1987: Interviewed by Bel Mooney for the *Telegraph* magazine, Linda claims that she lives like an ordinary person. Mooney is incredulous. "How can you be 'ordinary'," she writes, "when the royalties from *Yesterday* alone would be an unbelievable windfall to your average harassed mother of three, living in a council house?"

7 September 1989: "Super-veggie Linda McCartney has cooked up a barmy plan to save Britain!" the *Daily Star* reports. "She wants to see blokes at home sewing, cooking and spinning... but that's just for starters. Nutty Linda's drastic scheme also includes KNOCKING DOWN all factories."

9 September 1989: "Linda McCartney's performance on *Wogan* was as repetitive as some of her husband's songs," the *Star* comments. "She wants the world to give up meat. Looking pale and drawn, she insisted it was better for us. Yet there must be better adverts for health food lying in the morgue. 'The trouble is everyone thinks of vegetarians as cranks,' she complained. Listening to her, it was easy to understand why."

10 September: The *News of the World* weighs in with its views on Linda's *Wogan* appearance. "Linda blithely declared that there would be no starvation in the world if everyone gave up meat... Whether this theory makes her a genius or a silly moo is a matter of opinion."

21 March 1991: "Linda McCartney is in danger of becoming the laughing stock of the rock industry," the *Daily Star* announces gleefully, reporting that the hottest bootleg in town is a recording of Linda "warbling completely off-key" at a Knebworth charity concert. "The ex-Beatle's wife can be heard screeching her way through the famous na-na-na-na chorus of hubby Paul's classic Hey Jude, and failing to hit the right note almost every time. To add to her humiliation, two engineers can clearly be heard laughing and joking over her efforts." The paper helpfully reminds us that Linda has long been "the butt of showbiz jokes".

19 January 1992: "Most cookbooks are mouthwatering to read," comments the *Sunday Express*. "But Linda McCartney's two vegetarian books *Light Lunches* and *Main Courses* each brought on an acute attack of indigestion. It must have taken brass cheek to write down some of the recipes — such as the one where you fry ready-bought vegetable burgers, sprinkle them with salt and lemon juice and then top them with a fried egg. Others, like the Sauerkraut and Veggie Dogs, have you gagging at the name..."

2 February 1994: "Telly writer Carla Lane has dumped Paul McCartney's wife Linda as patron of her animal charity," the *Daily Star* reports. Big-hearted Carla explains that "linking the charity Animal Line with a mega-rich rock star's missus was putting people off sending in donations".

14 March 1995: The *Daily Telegraph* admonishes Linda for "pushing vegetarian propaganda at overly impressionable young people".

20 October 1995: Following the discovery that Linda McCartney veggieburgers contain 22.7 per cent fat, Emily Green of the *Independent* publishes an open letter to Linda: "You have certainly made short work of your old rival Jane Asher and her cute cakes. Obviously, an ability to cook wasn't high on Paul's list of qualities when choosing a girlfriend... As you appear like some latter-day Snow White in your meatless shepherd's pie commercials, you usurp attention better directed at those going through the painstaking business of converting their animal rearing to Soil Association organic standards."

24 December 1995: "Last week, when I read about Linda McCartney's lumpectomy, I was indifferent," observes Chrissy Iley in the *Sunday Times*. "Remember the old joke, what do you call a dog with wings? Linda McCartney... Even those who agree with her sentiments find them hard to stomach coming from her." Linda is "pathetic"; worse still, "she is plain and always has been".

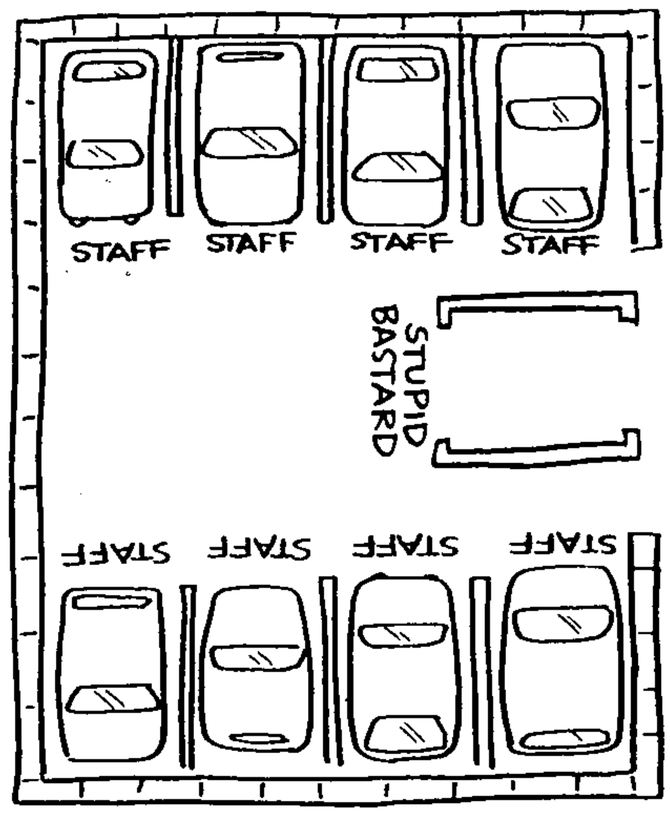
18 April 1996: The *Express* gloats over "rumblings of discontent" about Linda's attitude to our dumb chums. "Paul and Linda's neighbours in Peasmarsh, near Rye, fear that Linda's treatment of certain animals, in particular her refusal to put old and sick beasties out of their misery, is inhumane."

20 April 1998: Linda McCartney's death is announced — and suddenly it transpires that Fleet Street always adored her. The *Daily Star* carries an editorial headed "Our Sorrow For Macca"; as a further tribute, it prints a guide on "How to Go Veggie For Linda".

There is also a sudden flurry of hacks and hackettes boasting of their intimate friendship with her. The *Mirror* has "a tribute by Henrietta Knight, the writer who became Linda's friend". In the *Express*, David Wigg reveals that "Sir Paul told me many times how much Linda meant to him". There are further sensational disclosures from an "*Express* writer who was a friend and confidante of the Beatles", one Judith Simons: "The wedding plans had had to be kept secret. I was one of only three journalists who knew it had happened — and I had been sitting in a car outside the house for three days... I have other memories of Paul and Linda: Heather, her daughter, then eight, chasing me from the gate." Quite how this makes Simons a "confidante" is not explained.

"Whenever I met Linda McCartney, I was struck by her warmth and friendliness," reports Patrick Humphries in the *Daily Mail*. Hunter Davies ("biographer of the Beatles and a friend") adds his unique insight: "I was impressed by how strong Linda was." Elsewhere in the *Mail* Bel Mooney "shares her treasured photographs and memories of a rare glimpse inside the private world of the McCartneys". As Bel reminds us, she once interviewed Linda. "Yes, I miss her," she confesses.

"What really gets people," *Independent* hackette Emily Green complained in her open letter two years ago, "is that in making your money through your veggieburgers you also have the temerity to turn yourself into a latter-day Saint Linda..." It seems Linda McCartney needn't have bothered: Fleet Street is quite capable of canonising her all by itself.



Xanders.

THERE was much protest when Harriet Harman announced that Benefits Agency Medical Services (BAMS) is to be privatised. From now on the "all work test", the medical inspection which must be passed to receive incapacity benefit, will be run by the Anglo-French computing and service company, SEMA.

SEMA employs the lobbying company Westminster Strategy, which has taken on Mike Lee, who formerly worked for David Blunkett; Jo Moore, a former Labour press officer; and Howard Dauber, former chair of the Young Fabians. SEMA has other influential contacts, too. On 21 April employment minister Andrew Smith was the keynote speaker at a conference sponsored by SEMA, which is now doing better under Labour than it did under the Tories. The £305m BAMS contract dwarfs its previous public sector work.

The real test of the company's influence is approaching in the shape of Operation Quantum, a ten-year contract to privatise Prison Service Administration. SEMA is trying for the job in a consortium with Premier Prison Services and others. They are running against another consortium which includes *Eye* favourite EDS and another based around Capita, so competition will be fierce. No doubt all those nice Labour types at Westminster Strategy will be kept busy.

9% Number crunching

increase in Government tax revenue this year

decrease in basic Education and Employment budget this year

ONE MP who will be confused by the BAMS privatisation is Alan Howarth, who has changed tack on the issue a dizzying number of times.

The Tory defector who is now Labour MP for Newport East, once enthusiastically supported privatisation. Then he crossed the floor and started critically investigating the privateers. He asked all government departments to list and cost their contracts with SEMA and the other companies like EDS and Capita who are so firmly fixed in public sector contracting.

All in all he asked 14 parliamentary questions about SEMA's contracts over four months. Then he turned his razor sharp mind to the Tory's proposed privatisation of BAMS. He asked two parliamentary questions on the subject, haranguing his former colleagues about quality and cost benefits. Curiously, since Howarth the campaigner was made minister for the disabled, he has stayed quiet on the subject.

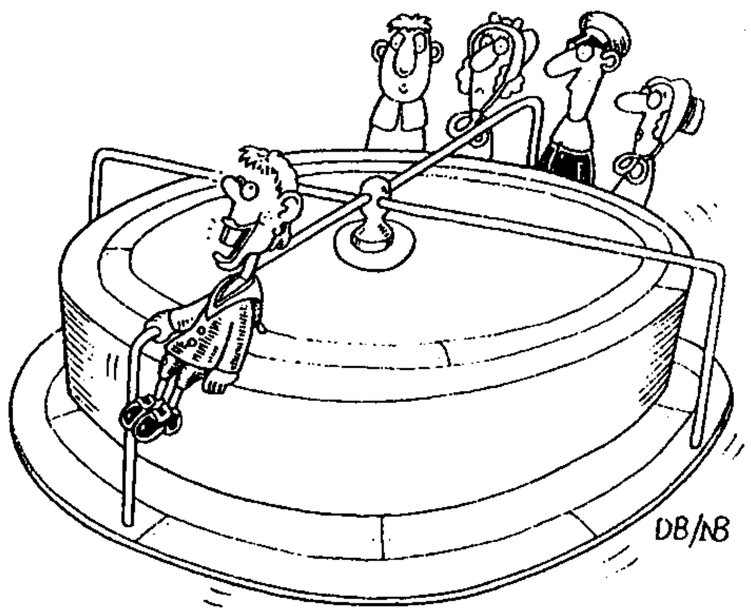
THE government's new commitment to freedom of information was clear for all to see on 8 April.

Kevin McNamara, Labour MP for Hull North, asked the secretary of state for defence "what was the cost to the exchequer in each year of his department's financial arrangements" with the convicted killer and former British army intelligence agent Brian Nelson (see *Eye* 946).

In view of the number of assassinations arranged by Nelson, this was obviously a matter of public interest. The answer came from the armed forces minister Dr John Reid: "I am withholding this information under exemption 1 (security) of the Code of Practice on access to government information".

NEW OLD SAYINGS

One U-turn deserves another



LABOUR spin doctors are trumpeting this month's court appearance by Leeds North East Labour MP Fabian Hamilton as some kind of victory against his political opponents — on the grounds that 10 of the 14 charges against him were ruled out on the technicality that they had been laid too late.

Hamilton appeared before Morley magistrates' court after several of his businesses went bust (*Eye* 946). After the hearing, party officials claimed Hamilton had been vindicated because he and his former computer company Serif Systems pleaded guilty to just four relatively minor breaches of the companies act. The MP and firm were fined £200 each and ordered to pay £900 costs because Hamilton used two different names on company records and because the company name was not displayed on the firm's premises.

Such offences are not necessarily as minor as they might appear. At an earlier hearing, high court judge Lord Justice Brooke had described the use of different names on company records as "the standard practice of ducking and weaving" in so-called "phoenix" cases, where businesses rise from the ashes of failed companies and miraculously carry on trading.

ONE Ulster Unionist MP who does not agree with his leader David Trimble about the Stormont agreement is Roy Beggs, the MP for Antrim East.

Readers will remember the report of Mr Beggs's conviction for obstruction after an Orange demonstration which blocked a road outside Larne (*Eye* 895), Larne being Beggs's political base. He has been a councillor there since 1973 (mayor from 1978 to 1983) and still rules the roost, although his Unionist party there is split into many factions.

Currently the factions are disputing a decision to sell a former hospital called Cairndhu to a property developer. The council paid half a million pounds for Cairndhu and has now sold it for not much more than half that money. Rival councillors point out that the council's solicitors, O'Rorke, McDonald and Tweed, had suggested that the council "would wish to retain some element of control over this property in the long term" and had drawn up a long lease with suitable covenants and restrictions. This advice was rejected by Mr Beggs and the council majority, who sold the freehold of the property off without any of the suggested conditions.

Incensed, Beggs's opponents have sent the whole issue to the district auditor. The investigation would normally have been carried out by Jim Lemon at the department of the environment's district auditor department in Belfast. But in February Mr Lemon was suspended from his auditor's job after £140,000 mysteriously went missing from his local Ballygowan Presbyterian church. In March, the police were brought in and are still investigating the missing money. The Cairndhu inquiry has been taken on by one of Mr Lemon's former colleagues.

"GORGEOUS" George Galloway, humanitarian MP for Glasgow Hillhead, warmed hearts when he brought a little Iraqi girl to Britain for treatment for leukaemia. But some of his constituents have found him less impassioned on their behalf.

An elderly couple who both suffer from Alzheimer's disease have been unimpressed by the support and treatment they have had from the NHS and social services, and their daughter has been writing to the Labour MP for help.

Over Christmas she left messages asking him to get in touch. Eventually he phoned back in January asking her to write with details. She tried to visit him at his surgery only to find it closed and a long line of people waiting outside. When she wrote again asking Galloway why he was so elusive, he sent a furious reply telling the woman "please be sure I never act under duress", called her letter "threatening" and said if she had waited 20 minutes he would have arrived at the surgery.

MICHAEL COLVIN, jovial Tory MP for Romsey, is not best known for turning down trips abroad (last September he went to Vilnius at the expense of the Lithuanian government to speak on the subject "Lithuania for Europe") — and now he is at it again.

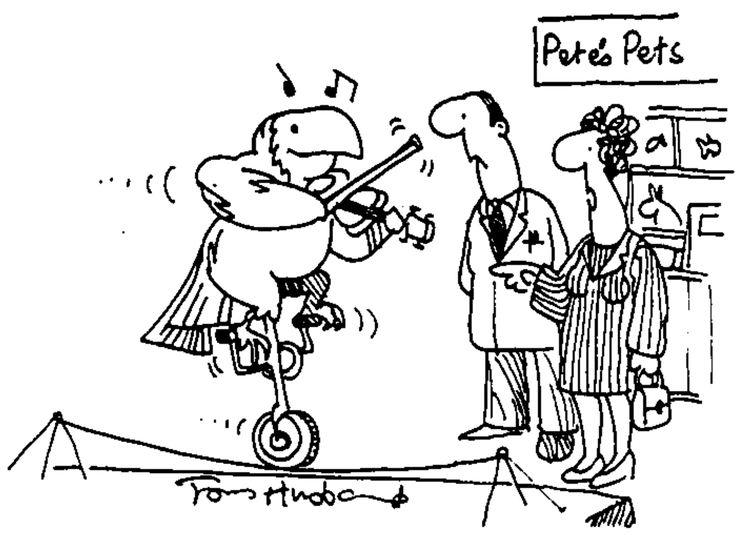
Colvin has circulated likely MPs and peers suggesting that "we might consider resurrecting the British Sudan All Party Parliamentary Group which lost most of its members at the General Election". One good reason for doing so, he wrote, is "a proposal to send a party of MPs to that country during the summer recess...

"The party would fly out business class and stay at the Khartoum Hilton... The visit would cover briefings on the current situation in the South... Sudan's new constitution, human rights, visits to temporary settlement areas and to sites featured strongly in Britain's imperial history... Spouses are welcome."

So hurry hurry hurry while the fanatical dictatorship in Sudan lasts!

THE first candidate for the national assembly for Wales has been chosen. And which ardent devolutionist has made himself available to represent the Welsh voter?

Step forward Rod Richards, former Tory MP for Clwyd West and one-time parliamentary under secretary for Wales. Richards is best remembered for his sleazy downfall after he had an illicit affair in summer 1996. How strange that the Conservatives, who fiercely fought against the devolution vote in last September's referendum, have become the first party to put up a candidate for the hated national assembly.



"Does he talk?"

LOBBY! LOBBY! LOBBY!

AS a former fundraiser for Tony Blair, Jonny Mendelsohn has useful experience dealing with big business. And since the general election he has put this to profitable use by setting up a New Labour lobbying firm with Neal Lawson (ex-adviser to Gordon Brown) and Ben Lucas (who used to work for Jack Straw).

"We are the only political consultancy to have been set up since the election of the new government — a government we understand because many of us played a part in its creation," the Lawson Lucas Mendelsohn brochure claims. "We will not just work for anyone because it 'pays'. There are industries and causes we will, and already have, refused to work for because we believe their behaviour or goals are politically or morally indefensible."

Mendelsohn is a former director of the Britain-Israel Parliamentary Group and the Inter-Parliamentary Council against anti-semitism; he remains vice-chairman of the Holocaust Educational Trust. Some Labour MPs have been surprised, therefore, to receive phone calls in the past couple of months from Jonny and his sidekick Craig Leviton on behalf of the Canadian firm Quebecor in connection with its (unsuccessful) takeover bid for the British printing company Watmoughs plc.

Quebecor is best known in Jewish circles for the notorious anti-semitism of its late founder, Pierre Peladeau, who used to keep a bust of Mussolini in his office. (Since his recent death he has been succeeded by his son, Pierre-Karl Peladeau.) In 1990 a Quebec news magazine reported that Pierre Peladeau had sent a memo to fashion writers at *Le Journal de Montreal* instructing them not to write about Montreal's Jewish designers: "I have a lot of respect for Jews, but they take up too much space." Peladeau tried to clarify his remarks but was censured by the Canadian Jewish Congress, and the University of Montreal dropped plans to give him an honorary degree.

In 1992, following publication of Mordechai Richler's book on the dangers of Quebecois separatism, Peladeau said of the Jewish author: "Richler has the cheek to call himself a Quebecker. That's like me pretending to be Chinese."

One of the turning points in Quebecor's history came in the late 1980s when it formed a business partnership with the deeply ethical Robert Maxwell, which propelled the company to its number two spot in the North American printing industry. Despite his Jewish origins, Maxwell came to Peladeau's defence over the charges of anti-semitism: "He's apologised. It's no good keeping on, is it?"

Peladeau hadn't apologised at all, and though Peladeau is now dead, the Quebecor Group boards are still packed with his cronies, including several with a "colourful" reputation.

According to Lawson Lucas Mendelsohn, who took the Quebecor account in February, "we believe that there will be a new breed of 'ethical winners' who will demonstrate that businesses no longer operate in a moral vacuum... LLM is as careful about its reputation as it is about its clients". But Jonny Mendelsohn admitted to the *Eye* last week that he had done only "cursory searches" on the history of Peladeau and Quebecor.

'Backbiter'

NOOKS and CORNERS

HERE is a sorry tale from Scotland concerning a fine public building and one John MacFarlane, a local boy who, having made a fortune from textiles in Manchester in the last century, retired to his native Bridge of Allan outside Stirling.

There he made the first donation to build the great monument to William Wallace on Abbey Crag, and offered his collection of art and natural history to the town. After his death in 1868 his collection was augmented by that of the oceanographer Sir John Murray, and MacFarlane's trustees raised a fine place to house it all. Designed by William Simpson, Bridge of Allan's Museum Hall was built in 1885-87 next to a public park. It is a jolly, rumbustious stone pile in the Romanesque style containing a public hall with excellent acoustics and a complete, reduced scale copy of the Parthenon frieze.

For many years it served the community proudly. It was requisitioned during the second world war, but in 1950 was bought by Bridge of Allan town council, again for the use and benefit of locals. Unfortunately local government reorganisation meant Bridge of Allan was annexed by Stirling district council which, in 1979, suddenly closed the Museum Hall because there was subsidence and it was deemed unfit for public use. The new council did not propose to repair and reopen the popular Museum Hall for public use, however. Despite local unhappiness, it seemed determined to demolish it. Obviously this had nothing to do with the fact that the council was Labour controlled and Bridge of Allan tends to be more conservative in its politics.

After the Museum Hall Association was founded in 1985 and a petition asking for its reopening was presented, the council reneged on its proposal to lease it to a local consortium. Instead this decent Victorian building — now B-listed — was deliberately neglected so that, in 1988, part of the internal structure collapsed. Eventually an urgent repairs notice was served by the secretary of state for Scotland obliging the council to make the building wind and watertight.

Though the district council was succeeded by a new authority, the inertia and malice have been maintained. Despite positive noises from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the opportunity to apply for lottery cash to restore the Museum Hall was deliberately ignored — despite the support of the Scottish Civic Trust, the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland, and other such bodies for a project to restore it. All the new Stirling council has done is apply to the court of session to change the title deeds so it can dispense with its inherited responsibilities and dispose of or change the use of the wretched Museum Hall (a decision is still awaited). No one has been found to take on the building, despite its fine site, probably because, if it were demolished, a dodgy retaining wall would have to be repaired. Indeed, the council would probably have to pay a developer to take on the Museum Hall.

So poor John MacFarlane's betrayed legacy to Bridge of Allen will now cost about £2.9m to restore and reopen, and Stirling council insists it cannot afford to do this. Yet the historic city of Stirling itself is awash with money for conservation and other schemes — some £100m in all, thanks to the Stirling Initiative. And the council is happy to convert the Stirling Tollbooth into yet another arts centre, even though the building is not in any danger. Oddly enough these councillors were once determined to demolish William Simpson's other civic masterpiece, the Albert Hall in Stirling, but now it has been restored. Why can't the same be done for the Museum Hall in Bridge of Allan?

● IN *Eye* 945 I recounted how Tesco was trying to build a large supermarket with flats on top to replace the old South London Hospital for Women, abetted by the officers of Lambeth (but not Wandsworth) council. I am happy to report that Tesco's appeal against refusal of planning permission has been lost. Tee hee!

'Piloti'

BACKBENCHER vs MINISTRY: HP SPECIAL

A "NEW" Labour MP gutsy enough to wage a relentless war against ministerial policy is a rare enough bird. When he is at the same time exposing a disturbing government scandal, involving a top civil servant and a loss to taxpayers of some £50m, it might be time for the world to pay attention.

When Charles Clarke became MP for Norwich South last May, he was caught up in voters' outrage at the threatened closure of several local Maff-funded scientific establishments, including part of the Central Science Laboratory (CSL). The reason for the threat, pushed by the Maffia's much-hated permanent secretary Richard "Barrowboy" Packer, was deepening embarrassment over the way the CSL's palatial new headquarters at Sand Hutton, near York, had become a financial black hole, sucking funds from all over Maff's hefty research budget.

The original estimated cost of Sand Hutton was £63m. But when building commenced four years ago, officials began spending money like water. Chairs for the reception area cost £3000 each; £26,000 went on a boardroom table. A creche for 24 children cost £750,000, with light fittings at £300 each. Walls were hung with expensive tapestries, with matching handmade carpets on the floors. Two kitchens were installed, where one would have sufficed, fitted with top of the range Miele equipment.

By the time Maff's palace was completed the original estimate of £63m had reached £126,874,000, with another £6,958,000 going on the site, for which half a forest was cleared in York's green belt, when space in a nearby half-empty industrial park was available for a fraction of the sum.

This left "Barrowboy" with a problem: how to fund his "black hole" when it had run out at twice its original budget? The answer was, firstly, to screw down every other Maff research budget in sight; and secondly to close as many other scientific establishments as possible, so their staff could be moved to York to justify the spending. Alas few scientists wanted to work in York. When the prestigious Torry laboratory in Aberdeen was closed in 1996, only 10 percent of the staff agreed to move. When Packer turned to Norwich, where more than 100 scientists happily work for the CSL and other research departments, such mayhem broke out he was forced to send the CSL's chief scientist John Gilbert to exile in Argentina.

Creative accounting was used to disguise the financial catastrophe of Sand Hutton. Capital and revenue charges amounting to millions were transferred from the CSL's account to Maff's own budget. Faced with mounting protests, Packer attempted damage limitation by telling senior staff at Norwich he would visit them on 27 February this year to "discuss the future of the Norwich laboratory and hear your views". Yet ten days before he had recommended to ministers that Norwich should be closed.

Much of this bizarre tale has only come to light through a series of parliamentary questions put by Charles Clarke, who on 2 April wrote to Jack Cunningham, the agriculture minister, stating that "this catalogue of events has destroyed any confidence in the integrity of the permanent secretary". It had "raised serious issues about the financial and management relationship between MAFF and its agency the CSL" and in particular about the role played by "Mr Packer as the accounting officer".

Perhaps the most devastating point Clarke's campaign has uncovered has been that, after spending more than £133m on Sand Hutton, the property is now valued in the books at only £87m, a loss to taxpayers of £46m. For that we could have built a major new hospital.

EYE TV

Littlejohn — Live And Unleashed (Sky One)

Inside Story: Ladies Night (BBC1)

ALTHOUGH numerous movies and novels — such as Sidney Lumet's *Network* and Gore Vidal's *Live from Golgotha* — have been dedicated to the awesome power of television, the curious truth is that telly actually suffers from an inferiority complex towards the other media.

TV takes many of its personnel and most of its ideas from the papers and is never happier than when a programme has some kind of tie-in with a big film release. Both examples of this inferiority complex were on high-profile display in the schedules last week.

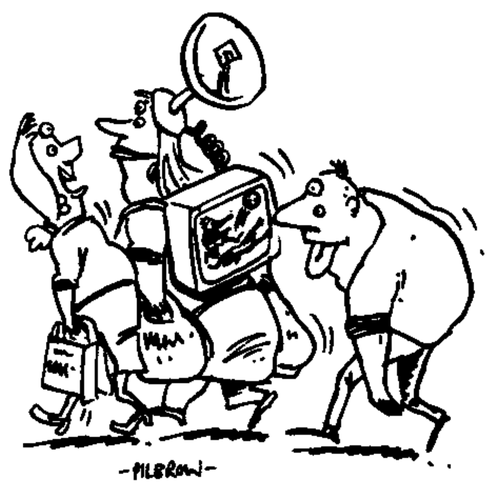
Print envy was well demonstrated by **Littlejohn — Live And Unleashed** (Sky One), in which Richard Littlejohn returned to Sky from LWT as part of the same deal (reported at closer to seven figures than six annually) which returned his newspaper columns from the Daily Mail to the Sun. The bi-media nature of the contract has more significance than merely in terms of cross-promotion. At the top of the first show, the host made explicit his ambition to create a TV version of the tabloid papers: to get on screen "some of those stories from the papers that you never see on TV".

This sounded like a radical agenda but was just a big way of saying that, like most TV magazine shows, this one would rely on animating old cuttings, the only difference being that they would cannibalise stories of a trashier kind. And so, in the first show, you had a transvestite line-dancer who alternated between male and female bookings, a slapper who claimed to have bedded Leonardo DiCaprio, the female boxer Jane Couch and a group of posh lap-dancers.

All of these people were well-stained with tabloid ink, although in some cases it had dried several weeks ago. An equally giveaway touch was that Littlejohn's special guest presenter was Jeremy Clarkson, another Sun columnist.

Littlejohn's on-screen persona, like his newspaper one, is of the guy who breaks the rules of politically correct Britain. A smugly offensive title sequence shows him walking past a beggar in the street and glaring angrily through his windscreen at a squeegee merchant who coincidentally happens to be black. His opening monologue claimed that his recent absence from the screens was because he had been kidnapped by a "New Labour lesbian and gay collective".

Regrettably, two elements in the first edition rather went against this image of the broadcaster who knows no fear. The first was that poor old Littlejohn looked bloody terrified, his upper lip dripping sweat and his mind scrambled by live TV to



"So how d'you get Brian to come shopping?"

the extent that he kept referring to the transvestite line-dancer as a "lap dancer", which was, in fact, the next but one item. Serves them right for booking two such tackily similar items in the same show.

The second oddity was that Littlejohn's topical gags, while fearlessly taking cheap shots at recent stories (George Michael, etc), made no reference at all to the two big stories of the day of transmission: the death of Linda McCartney and the break-up of Rupert Murdoch's marriage. Presumably the former was judged off-bounds on grounds of taste and the latter because the subject owned the television station. These may be common enough reasons for dropping stories in the rest of the media, but you shouldn't be shouting about your fearlessness and refusal of the rules of political correctness if you're going to abide by them.

The most amusing thing about Littlejohn's show is the identity of the advertisers. The first ad break brought commercials for disposable nappies, sanitary towels with revolutionary flexi-wings, Disney's cartoon Hercules (one of the most politically correct movies ever made) and a McDonald's ad in which almost all the characters were black. If you had set out to choose a set of ads most likely to irritate Littlejohn and his target audience, these would have been high on the list. So was Sky being ironic or, because of a lack of advertising, giving free reruns to campaigns sold into other slots?

But the final oddity about this tabloid-wannabe television is that the tabloid newspapers themselves are currently trying to head upmarket in pursuit of the Blairite Middle England audience. The Sun, having first sold Littlejohn to its readers as an untameable thug, now stresses in publicity for him that he can be positive where praise is merited.

At least television's craven relationship with the movies makes more commercial sense, but it's still depressing to find Inside Story (BBC1), a factual strand which has carried many serious stories, giving over an hour to Ladies Night, a film about male-stripping. This was, of course, inevitably "the real-life stories behind the hit movie The Full Monty".

Irritatingly, the film tried to have it both ways, teasing with salacious images then distancing itself from them with the occasional feminist talking head complaining about the degradation of women. Ladies Night confirmed a depressing tendency in documentary television, which is that fact now has the best chance of getting on screen if it's a real-life version of celluloid fiction. Soon Northern Ireland will feature only "as the real-life story of the conflict featured in Jim Sheridan's The Boxer" and mental illness as "the truth behind the Oscar-winning hit As Good As It Gets".

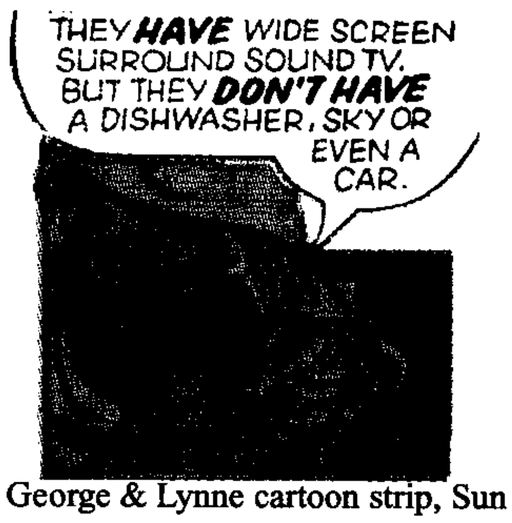
'Square Eyes'

Plugged In

Praise for TV Diana movie

A film about the final year in the life of Princess Diana received an "overwhelmingly positive" response when it was premiered last night.

Daily Mirror on 'Diana: Tribute to the People's Princess' on Mirror Group's Live TV



George & Lynne cartoon strip, Sun

CONTRIBUTORS: Hugh Jaeger & David O'Donnell.

An occasional column devoted to cross-media plugs masquerading as news.

EYE-SKY-B SPECIAL

THE Sun got itself into a froth of outrage on behalf of Sky TV over the BBC's coverage of the Masters golf tournament.

"The BBC has exclusive rights," whined a leader. "That should be great news for viewers. But look what happened yesterday: Seven hours of play went unseen… It's a joke. Sky would have shown every bit of play live. But not the silly bunkers at the Beeb."

Great plug for Sky — but complete bollocks. The Augusta National Golf Club, which runs the Masters, is one of America's richest and snootiest. It restricts television coverage of the early rounds to two hours a day for everyone, including America's CBS, the host broadcaster, and will have no truck with any satellite station. It is rich enough not to give a toss about Rupert Murdoch's chequebook. The BBC in fact screened more golf from Augusta than CBS, because the BBC (unlike Sky) does not have commercial breaks.

So even if Sky did have the rights to the Masters it would not be permitted to screen a minute's more coverage than the Beeb. Everyone in the golf world — and at Sky — knows this perfectly well. But the Sun never lets facts get in the way in the rush to brown-nose the boss.

Meanwhile Times columnist Julian Muscat did his own bit of brown-nosing, albeit at greater length. He took exception to BBC commentator Peter Alliss having remarked that press criticism of the Masters coverage was "ignorant". "Insult us and we will not be so pleasantly disposed," he warned darkly. Helpfully, Muscat added: "Perhaps the answer is to sit Augusta officialdom before some of Sky's footage of the Ryder Cup…"

MEDIA NEWS

MORE on Rod Liddle, hip editor of the *Today* programme. In a recent *Guardian* interview he discussed his enjoyment of Labour politics in the mid-eighties. "The thing I enjoyed most was the seething hatred that existed between members of the party," he said.

Chums of his at the time remember this seething hatred well. One particular night in 1985, the chain-smoking ex-Goth made a unique appearance at a Labour ward meeting in Leyton. At the time — it was during the miners' strike — Liddle was working as a researcher and speechwriter for the then Labour opposition frontbench. But to create the right impression on this particular evening, he swapped his House of Commons suit for jeans and a borrowed donkey jacket. And to top off his fancy dress, he also asked to borrow a "Victory to the Miners" sticker.

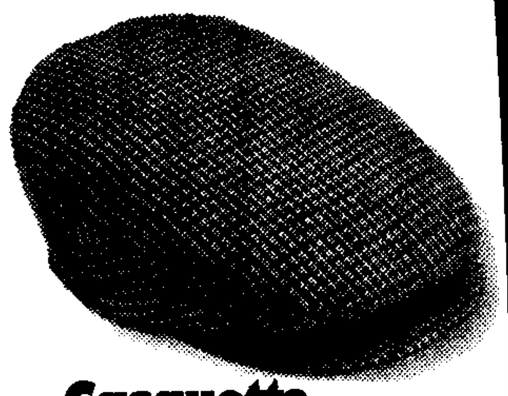
No donation to the strikers' funds was offered, but he did return the credibility-giving sticker to its owner once his toadying needs had been met.

HEAD of BBC Resources "Bonking" Rod Lynch is clearly gearing up for the day when his bit of the corporation becomes a limited company and he becomes a fat cat executive.

Resources studio managers have been sent an e-mail stating that "Rod Lynch is holding a 'golf day' on 10th July", and seeking "suggestions of customers and contacts at Senior Executive level to invite".

Greg Dyke, head of Pearson Television and Channel 5, was given as an example of a suitable man for Rod Lynch to network with on the golf course at Foxhills, Chertsey.

While Lynch was worrying about his pals on the putting green, unions were balloting members at the BBC on grittier matters like pay structures, multi-skilling and... the changes expected from Resources being hived off.



Casquette Barbour Blair

La Blair, de Barbour, représente l'archétype de la casquette classique britannique. Elle est confectionnée en tweed de pure laine beige et marron... comme il y a 50 ans. Prix: 260 F environ.

Notre avis: pour se faire plaisir à jouer au gentilhomme anglais sans se ruiner.

Le Chasseur Francais

SCOTTISH Television political producers have become increasingly disillusioned since the abrupt departure of their director of broadcasting, Blair Jenkins.

Jenkins, who was sacked suddenly last November, had been planning to replace *Dimbleby* with a Scottish-based programme covering the business of Scotland's new parliament. Since his sacking, producer Noel Dolan has walked out after rows over editorial interference and plans to assign only one reporter to cover the new administration.

He told Scottish hacks that one senior STV executive had referred to the coming parliament as a "glorified council" and said the television channel should treat it like it treats Glasgow city council.

Things are little better at BBC Scotland where the news programme *Reporting Scotland* has been criticised by independent assessors for being too soft on Labour. Any idea that the channel might pay heed to the criticism were dismissed by coverage of the secret plan to import nuclear waste from Georgia to Dounreay. While the UK-wide *One o'clock News* led with revelations of the government's hush-hush deal, *Reporting Scotland* relegated it to third place — firmly behind a fawning piece about Scottish secretary Donald Dewar's plans to review policing after criticisms of Grampian's chief constable.

THE Radio 3 *Record Review* sackings (last *Eye*) are part of the continuing policy change inspired by focus groups who want to dumb-down and dumb-out the musicians.

Those who know about music are no longer allowed to talk about it in case they use difficult words like "fugue" or "ritardando". Thus scripts are centrally written by back-room boys for non-musician celebrities, newsreaders or other non-specialist presenters.

Top of the hatelist is the young "Petshop" Trelawny (26), the ex-Classic FM person who is loathed on Radio 3 for his eccentric word stressing and cocky, swaggering chat. He so loves his own name that he announces it at every opportunity — in the third person. He is now attracting the same sacks of hate mail previously reserved for Gerry Anderson and Paul Gambaccini.

Correct pronunciation of composers' names and works has been declared elitist and unnecessary, and populist mangling by "Petshop" and others positively encouraged as "friendly and accessible". The famous BBC pronunciation unit, now renamed "Pronunciation Research Department", has been made prohibitively expensive. This is to ensure producers can no longer afford to use it — the inevitable prelude to abolition.

Ironically this bit of dumbing-down comes just as Classic FM is showing a marked increase in confidence when handling foreign words. Mee-tooist Radio 3 is also about to copy Classic FM in using a computerised playlist (all the way from Albinoni's Adagio to Pachelbel's Canon) — just as CFM itself is beginning to make real programmes on the lines of the old R3 to catch some of the defectors who have turned away in disgust from the new "cool" Radio Three.

CHANNEL 4's archaeological series *To The Ends of the Earth* recently featured Colin Martin, a Derbyshire coal miner turned gold-digger who persuaded several hundred people to invest in a scheme to salvage a packet ship called the Hanover, wrecked off Cornwall in 1763.

The sympathetic documentary portrayed Martin as a well-meaning if naive adventurer who fell foul of the archaeological establishment. Those who actually know anything about this saga might disagree.

Martin and partner David Earl announced in their company prospectus that "this investment opportunity anticipates a dividend return of 1000 percent after taxation", claiming that the Hanover had a cargo of gold and diamonds worth £50m. But they forgot to warn potential backers that many contemporary accounts of the wreck suggested that *all* the Hanover's treasure was recovered within three years of her loss, as a brief visit to the newspaper archive at Exeter Museum would have confirmed. Channel 4 knew this too, since it was told in December 1997.

Nevertheless plenty of people were taken in. In October 1996 the *Sunday Times* published a story headed "Wreckfinder hits £50m crock of gold". No wonder investors bought £500,000-worth of shares.

In February 1997 the archaeological diving unit — which advises government — offered to help Martin salvage the wreck properly, preventing any damage to the ship's remains. But he refused their assistance. Instead, using explosives and industrial suction pumps, Martin and his team pressed on. Martin's company Hydrasalve Ltd was later fined for breaking company law — another fact omitted from the Channel 4 programme.

In the end, only cannon, ships' timbers, a few plates, human bones and a rat were recovered. Undeterred, Martin found a valuer who told shareholders the cannon alone were worth "in excess of a million pounds". This too was reported without qualification by Channel 4, which neglected to add that other experts put the value at around £120,000.

In order to accommodate the continuing expansion of our shop and cafe this Gallery will close at the end of the month
HUNTER

INTERNET providers beware: Carter Fuck & Co, the celebrated libel lawyers, are on to you.

GreenNet, a service provider, has been ordered by Carter Fuck to delete a press release issued by the South African Municipal Workers Union, protesting at water privatisation in South Africa and referring to the British water company Biwater.

At the same time Sangonet, which manages the South African *Mail and Guardian*'s archive, was given seven days to remove an article also mentioning Biwater. Both providers complied, under protest.

WHICH? HUNT

SHEILA McKechnie's drive to commercialise the Consumers' Association is proving a monumental failure with the organisation haemorrhaging staff at an alarming rate.

The CA is advertising for a director of communications and a director of human resources after the previous incumbents left their jobs. Director McKechnie is also restructuring her entire public relations department and six of the seven media workers have been asked to go.

Alas the sales of *Which?* magazines show no response to this radical restructuring by the consumers' champion.

Diana balls

"**Gay Demokratische Neurosen.** Known for his graphic illustrations of male rape and gay porn, taboo-busting artist Martin von Ostrowski presents a new collection of works devoted to 'Neuroses of Democracy'. Executed in brightly coloured oils and chalk, they include a portrait of Princess Diana, 'Diana war eine von uns' (Diana was one of us), which depicts a smiling princess whose lips, nose, ears and cheekbones are all extensively pierced. Until 24 April, Mon-Fri 9am-5pm."

— Exhibition listing in *Time Out* (submitted by Bryan Thomas)

"Diana, Princess of Wales. She wrote poetry on our souls. And made us wonder. And then the heavens cracked open and claimed her. This is her London: where she lived — where she dined and shopped — where she laughed and loved — where she poured her heart out and wept and went her own way. NB, getting a two-zone travel card is a good idea because in the second half of the walk we'll take two very short tube journeys: first to where it all began — to her apartment; and then to the palace. Guided by Desiree or Samantha."

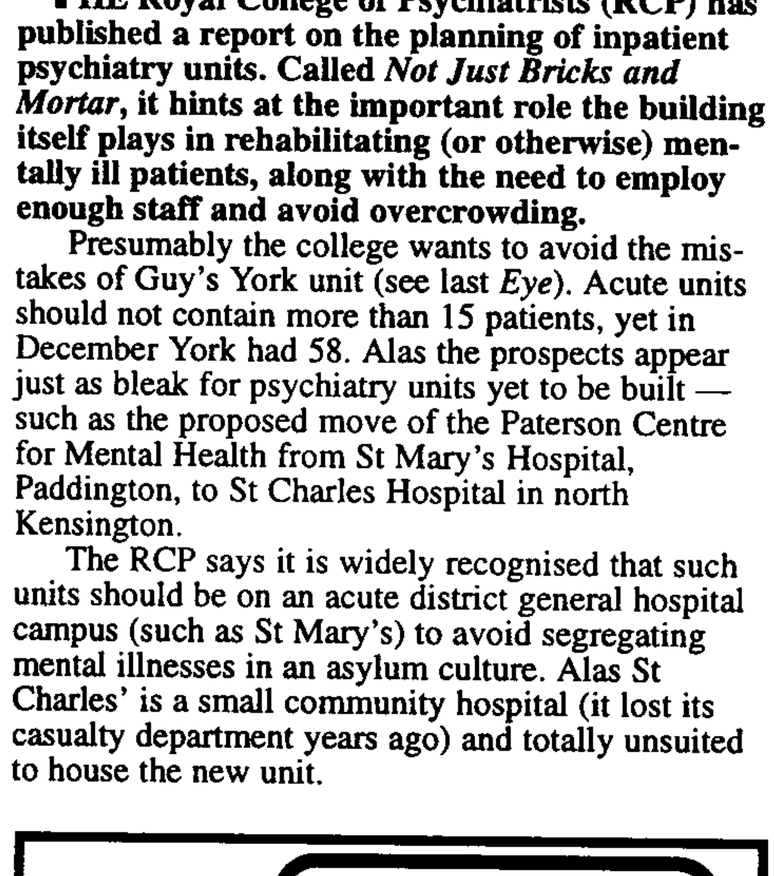
— Brochure for The Original London Walks (submitted by Paul Roberts)

DOING THE ROUNDS

THE Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCP) has published a report on the planning of inpatient psychiatry units. Called *Not Just Bricks and Mortar*, it hints at the important role the building itself plays in rehabilitating (or otherwise) mentally ill patients, along with the need to employ enough staff and avoid overcrowding.

Presumably the college wants to avoid the mistakes of Guy's York unit (see last *Eye*). Acute units should not contain more than 15 patients, yet in December York had 58. Alas the prospects appear just as bleak for psychiatry units yet to be built — such as the proposed move of the Paterson Centre for Mental Health from St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, to St Charles Hospital in north Kensington.

The RCP says it is widely recognised that such units should be on an acute district general hospital campus (such as St Mary's) to avoid segregating mental illnesses in an asylum culture. Alas St Charles' is a small community hospital (it lost its casualty department years ago) and totally unsuited to house the new unit.



To compound matters half the admissions to the Paterson Centre are currently via St Mary's casualty department (psychotic patients, attempted suicides, deliberate self-harm, etc). The St Charles' site would be unable to offer this option. "The proposals are misconceived, poorly thought through and unworkable, and to proceed further would be to damage the mental health services in this area," said one consultant psychiatrist involved. "I know of no interested party, apart from managers at St Mary's hospital, which favours the proposals."

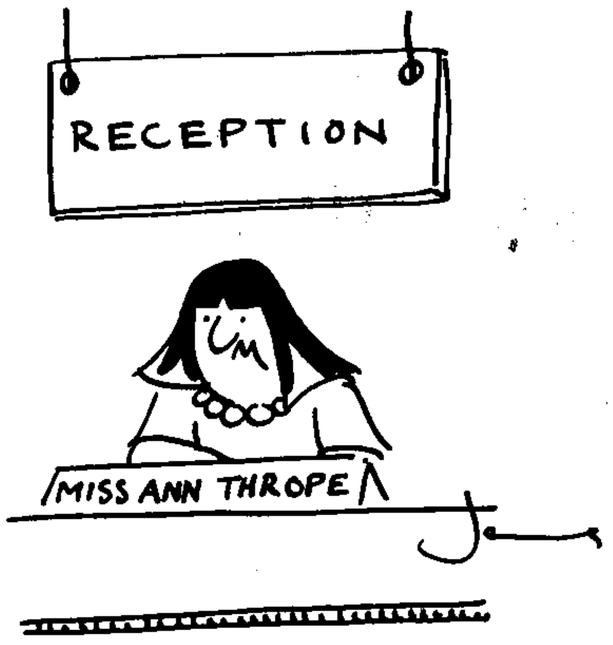
And why might the managers favour it? Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster health authority is perilously short of money. But buildings on the St Mary's site in Paddington are now worth a mint because of the proposed Heathrow link. So it's time to sell...

● WELL hurrah for the US-based National Cancer Institute-National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project (NCI-NSABABP). By stopping its breast cancer prevention trial 14 months early after discovering "high risk" women taking tamoxifen had 45 percent fewer breast cancers than those taking placebo, they have ensured that millions of lives will be saved immediately. Or have they?

The drug isn't even listed yet for the prevention of breast cancer, so no one outside a clinical trial can take it for this purpose. This will of course stuff other researchers interested in the more longterm consequences of taking tamoxifen, since many women in these trials, in Italy and the UK-based International Breast Cancer Intervention study (IBIS), will now insist on taking tamoxifen, rather than risk the random allocation between tamoxifen and placebo.

It's already known that in women who've had breast cancer, tamoxifen reduces the risk of a new cancer developing by 40 percent, so the results are not surprising. It's also known that the drug has side effects. Thirty three women taking tamoxifen in the American study developed womb cancer, compared with 11 in the placebo group, and nearly three times as many women suffered pulmonary emboli (lung clots).

These conditions were much rarer and far more treatable than the breast cancer that was prevented, but whether they will be over 10 or 15 years is anybody's guess. Also there is no evidence that the women treated with tamoxifen will actually live longer. The treated women may get far fewer cancers, but will the cancers they get be more aggressive? Treatment is likely to select "tamoxifen resistant cancers" which may have a higher mortality rate.



In a previous study of women with breast cancer who took tamoxifen for five or ten years, there were almost twice as many distant recurrences and deaths in the 10 year group. The American trial also gives no indication of how long women should be treated for, and which groups of women will benefit from tamoxifen and which won't. Those at the highest risk are more likely to develop hormone independent tumours and hence may be more hindered than helped.

The only hope of finding answers is if the British and Italian trials continue. The IBIS trial nearly didn't get off the ground four years ago due to difficulty finding volunteers willing to risk taking a placebo. Now the organisers have written to all 2,500 participants informing them of the American results in the hope of getting them to continue. Some hope. In medical research, the pressure to publish first outw eighs just about everything else.

● ALAN LOVELL is a new independent director of Winchester and Eastleigh Healthcare Trust, where his business acumen will be much appreciated.

As finance director of the construction company Conder, Lovell stepped in as chief executive when the firm fell into debt. Despite his major "rationalisation" — sacking 1,800 employees — the company went under in 1992. He then moved to the construction company Costain, which also started to have problems. It lost £143m in 1995 — the year Lovell was awarded a 28 percent payrise on promotion from finance director to chief executive on £180,000.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

EVERYONE is asking the obvious questions around the BSE inquiry. Were warnings ignored? Did economic cuts in the veterinary service go too near the bone? Did government skimp precautions rather than spend money? But no one has yet asked the other, much more important question: what possessed people to feed rendered-down bits of dead sheep and other cows to dairy cows who are uniquely equipped by nature to digest grass?

Consider the following. The other end of skin-pampering soaps and "healthy" margarines is a huge mountain of crushed beans and oilseeds from which those commercially-essential polyunsaturates — and the rest — have been extracted. And because they are all, basically, new plants waiting to grow, they contain a very high proportion of protein.

Now, protein is an essential diet component for dairy cattle. The demand on a high-yielding cow is colossal, so she needs concentrate energy-feed. But the yield-regulating component is protein. And an obvious place to get both energy and protein cheaply is from the crushed oilseed waste.

So, logically, all through the 60s, 70s and 80s, the biggest oilseed crusher, the Anglo-Dutch conglomerate Unilever, owner of van den Berghs, makers of Flora and other margarines, ran a subsidiary, BOCM Silcock, which used its by-products to produce animal feeds.

Because of its parent company's muscle, BOCM dominated the British animal feed industry.

These feeds were always computer-formulated on a least-cost basis, with different components being varied from day to day according to fluctuations in world commodity prices. Despite years of campaigning by the National Farmers' Union, the compounders always refused to disclose ingredients on labels for reasons of "commercial confidentiality".

BOCM was always under pressure from above to raise profitability. This meant driving to increase market share, or stealing a cost-cutting formulation march on the competitors. It ran a rather plush research centre at Colworth to refine its understanding of animal nutrition, and there, in the late 1970s, it took up a new technique, using cows with portholes in their sides, to place micropore Dacron bags containing different proteins straight into the cows' rumens and monitor their fate. This showed that "foreign", non-vegetable proteins aren't digested in the rumen. They tend to pass on into the cow's large intestine and get absorbed directly into the blood, without first being broken down or translated. This is more efficient (for the farmer). So, firstly, oceans were hoovered for small fish to grind up, because research showed that adding fishmeal to dairy diets could produce an instant 12 percent rise in milk yield.

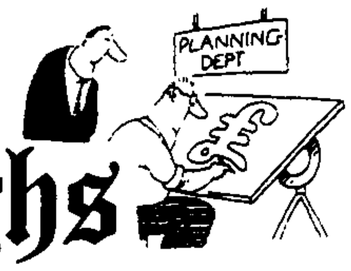
Then the survey threw up a readily-available, cheap protein source which had this property of durability but wasn't subject to the supply limitations or relatively high price of fishmeal. The exact identity of this ingredient was never revealed. The company may have found a way of "sealing" plant protein and making it indigestible; but that would have added, rather than saved, cost.

However, it was just around this time that the government rules were changed to allow the rendering industry to shift huge quantities of abattoir waste more competitively. And, just after, BOCM launched a new type of cattle feed with the slogan "UDP — undegradable protein!" Special seminars were put on for journalists to explain the benefits of proteins that by-passed ruminant digestion and went straight to produce milk. Full-page, full-cover advertising in farming magazines promised new-generation feeds which guaranteed big increases in milk yield at a time when government policy, and professional advice, was maximum production. Other feed compounders reeled but quickly followed suit.

Today, a decade and a half later, we are picking over the aftermath of one of farming's worst disasters. But the question remains: will the BSE inquiry confine itself to rapping the knuckles of hapless civil servants, or will it dare to examine the role of multinational companies and international trade in the epidemic?

'Marge'

Rotten Boroughs



IT'S local election time, and some councillors are suffering severe memory lapses as they canvass gullible voters. In LONDON all the seats are up for grabs (compared to a third elsewhere), and the electorate has its first chance to respond to the ignominious events of the last four years. Here are some names to look for on the ballot paper…

HACKNEY: Here, a vote for Labour is a vote for leader-designate John McCafferty, whose regime as council leader in the late 80s and early 90s was described as "poisonous and odious" after one recent corruption inquiry.

During his eight-year tenure the council virtually collapsed. Schools failed to teach (Hackney Downs became a *cause célèbre*); children in care were left unprotected from paedophile social workers (Mark Trotter); invoices were unpaid (a social services manager buried £1.5m worth of bills in his office sofa); millions were wasted on senseless internal inquiries (including the inquiry into all the other inquiries); and housing director Bernard Crofton was suspended on trumped-up charges of racism after chancing upon recruitment fraud in the town hall.

When details emerged two years ago that because Trotter was a Labour activist the ruling Labour group had covered up news of his death from AIDS (after allegedly buggering children in his care), a group of Labour members left in disgust to sit as independents. Labour then lost control of the council for the first time in 25 years. Many of the rebels are now standing as Liberals or Conservatives.

Even though Labour is still favourite to win, the party is having trouble attracting suitable candidates. Among those it has turned to in desperation are Abdul Mullah, who was criticized three years ago when it was reported that 18 members of his family were on the council payroll; and Michael Desmond, who has been successfully prosecuted for being a slum landlord in south London.

WESTMINSTER: Residents can at last respond to district auditor John Magill's findings on the Tories and their gerrymandering/homes-for-votes scandal, which culminated in then leader Shirley Porter and sidekick David Weeks being fined £30m. Porter has long since cleared off to Israel and California; Weeks, however, has the cheek to throw himself at the mercy of voters again. His election material makes no references to his massive fine or to the appeal he has launched.

Other Tories linked with the gerrymandering scandal who also want votes include former housing and planning chairman Alan Bradley (his manifesto mentions nothing about that department's favours-for-VIPs wing, as revealed in the last *Eye*); Alex Segal, whose 1987 document *How To Keep Westminster Conservative* occupied so much of the auditor's time; Simon Milton, former bagman for Ian Greer Associates, who was involved with the decision to place homeless families in asbestos-filed tower blocks, an operation which John Barratt in his report found to be "politically motivated"; and former mayor Robert Davis, Milton's regular holiday partner to Disneyland (how sweet), whose report around the time of gerrymandering told how "enforcing planning laws in our target wards [would] ensure the right type of homes are provided with the right sort of voters". When asked to elaborate he couldn't. Nor did he explain to voters how they benefited from his spending his £17,300 mayor's hospitality budget in four-and-a-half months, mostly on dinners for his university pals. Now's his chance.

ENFIELD: Voters can at last give two fingers to Coun Richard Course, who has been barred from standing for Labour but is now an independent. He will be fondly remembered in Arnos ward for calling local campaigners against a housing development "unwashed, hysterical, hate-filled women". Add to that his recent driving conviction after another group of campaigners complained he had tried to run them over, and Course's manifesto looks, well, somewhat less than ideal.

Yorkshire Special

WAKEFIELD council chief executive Roger Mather has been heavily criticised for his 17.5 percent pay rise to £105,000 — more than Tony Blair earns for running a borough slightly larger than the sleepy West Yorkshire town.

News of the rise went down like a Branson balloon, especially as it followed a council decision to axe £1m and 40 jobs in social services. Mather actually earns more than £105,000 because he is also paid as clerk to West Yorkshire police authority — a task he carries out in work time generously paid for by Wakefield council taxpayers.

In Leeds, meanwhile, the education department hasn't had an education chief for 18 months despite three rounds of interviews. After resorting to headhunters to fill the £72,000-a-year post, at the fourth time of asking the job was duly offered to one Steven Andrews — who promptly withdrew to remain an adviser to the department for education and employment.

So the search goes on and taxpayers face an estimated £40,000 bill from the "recruitment specialists".

McRed Face of the Week

STRANGE goings on at NORTH LANARKSHIRE council. Strathclyde police have been called in after an unnamed councillor's computer was used to download porn from the internet. A councillor then resigned citing "health reasons".

Council leader Harry McGuigan said Labour would do "everything possible to cooperate with the police investigation". How different from his response a month before when an SNP councillor first raised the allegations. Then he said "the story is a pack of lies. There is no truth in it." Surely the council authorities have been over-zealous calling in McKnacker over some seedy forays onto the internet — or is there something we don't know? Answers on a postcard, please.

Coventry

NOT content with writing off a £5m loss incurred by its profligate direct labour force CCS, Labour-controlled Coventry city council wants to revitalise the discredited department and is appointing three new operational managers, all on £50,000 a year plus bonus.

They will be supervised by a new CCS supremo "trouble-shooting" Mike Barnes, the council's director of personnel and information. He will receive an "honorarium" for his duties, but the council won't say how much. Speculation is also growing as to who will be the council's new chief press officer following the resignation of Mark Fletcher and his number two, Caroline Wilson, who have tired of trying to put a human gloss on the shambles that is Labour-controlled Coventry. The pair now run a freelance PR agency called "Reputations".

Pseuds Corner

In situationist projects, the methods of instrumental science are inverted and replaced with a disturbing desire to make people suffer in order to experience the sensual, essentially alienated, narcissistic, aspects of modern life. The poetics of weathering, mortality, etc, became, in situationist practice, a reactionary, nihilistic lament upon the death of a reciprocity between individual and communal creativity.

PATRICK LYNCH
Building Design

HOW TO SAY "HELLO": TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

To say "Hello" rightly is to be aware of the other person as a phenomenon, to 'happen' to him or her and be ready for him or her to 'happen' to you! This course will provide a theoretical base, through the concepts of Transactional Analysis, to help you to reflect upon your attitudes and beliefs in order to be more open and natural — in Transactional Analysis terms to be more authentic, autonomous and spontaneous.

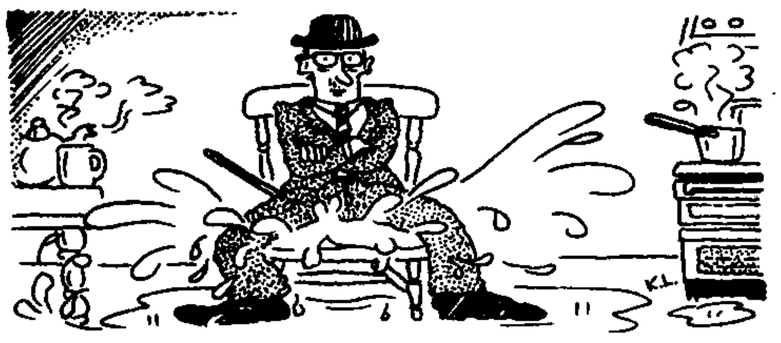
University of Lancaster
Summer School prospectus

I sleep about one hour every night. All I can do is work, or I go mad. See, I don't wear any underwear. It's about being free.

HARMONY KORINE
Weekend Telegraph

By this stage, there was bedlam all around Parkhead. You couldn't help but revel in the vastness of it all. Celtic's home wore the aspect that all stadiums do at some time. It seemed the last solid thing left on the earth, catching within its confines all the light left in the world. Everything outside seemed shadowy and temporal, while all that mattered was what was happening inside this impressive bowl deep in the East End of Glasgow. The abject, intense hate that will forever characterise these fixtures acted like a subtle inspiration to the players. On the pitch, the vitriol was transformed into a rare energy.

ALAN PATTULLO
Scotsman



You dig for meanings, following Beuy's tortuous thought, and make up your own as you go along. The best vitrine contains a white kitchen chair whose seat is larded with a flattened patty of crumbly, yellowed fat, as though a once-present sitter has been reduced to mere matter. A thermometer poking out of the fat reads 19 degrees Celsius. There's also a disconnecting element from a fridge in the vitrine, and a fridge's motor screwed to the cabinet's underside. You have to squat down to find it. The work is dated 1964-85, which might mean that Beuys put the fat on the chair in the sixties, but didn't stick it in the vitrine till 20 years later. Fat Chair is all about entropy, the unforgiving laws of thermodynamics, our mortality. It is a great work.

ADRIAN SEARLE
Guardian

This garment embodies the playful jubilant nature of designer Jean Engelheart. Stitched into each piece with pride and craftsmanship is a big HOORAY! We love to share this enthusiasm sculpted in cloth for a new definition of "Global Warming". Enjoy!

Flax + Flaxseeds shirt label

CONTRIBUTORS: Nick Jeffrey, Hugh Purcell, Nigel Longhurst, Jim Fraser, Peter Barnes, Julie Welsh.

£10 paid for entries

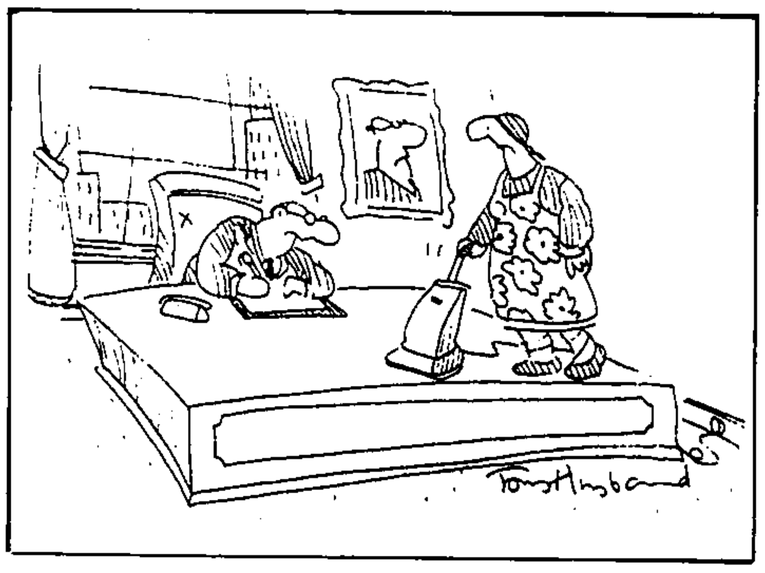
SIGNAL FAILURES
New Labour, New Asset Stripping

THE present Tory government (sic) is proving almost as laughable as the last one as far as its promises to make greater use of rail are concerned.

Its real priority — hoarding cash — is clear from its eagerness to get rid of dormant railway assets. Transport minister Gavin Strang recently instructed British Rail "to continue to dispose of surplus property at market value" when he could have ordered BR to halt the disposals temporarily.

And instead of admitting that her government is just as committed to disposal of public assets as the last, transport under secretary Glenda Jackson has come up with several dubious reasons land is still being sold off at a rate of about £60-70m a year, even though rail businesses say they need much of it for future expansion. After Matthew Taylor, the Liberal Democrat's environment spokesman, sent her a copy of the Eye's last article on the issue (Eye 939), Jackson wrote back: "We think it is most unlikely that more than a handful of the sites still owned by BR have potential for future passenger or freight use, and that suspending disposals would therefore not be useful."

Even Railtrack, which is not known for its eagerness to expand the rail network, disputes Jackson's estimate. Of the 76 disused rail lines BR is to dispose of, 20 or so are of immediate interest to



Railtrack for rail use. Rail Property Ltd, the division of BR which is flogging the last teaspoons of the family silver, is going to sell off 450 properties over the next 18 months, but Railtrack reckon 100 of these would be useful to help the rail system relieve our overused roads. Yet most are likely to go to property developers for more lucrative uses than public transport and rail freight.

Railtrack is not alone in its concerns. The commons transport select committee said in its report on the proposed strategic rail authority: "Much land that was designated as non-operational land some years ago could prove to be essential to the growth of passenger and freight rail traffic, particularly in allowing the construction of intermodal facilities." This means facilities for English Welsh and Scottish Railways (which is aiming to triple the volume of rail freight within 10 years) to carry bulk goods to city-centre terminals for onward distribution by small lorries. Once again, sites for these sort of terminals are going to organisations which have no particular need of a rail connection.

Another excuse from Jackson is that holding on to these valuable state assets "would effectively entail a subsidy by the taxpayer and a distortion to competition". If public investment in railways is a distortion of competition, what are the large sums being spent by local authorities on preparing road bridges for the advent of 40-ton lorries in January?

Jackson has been urged from various quarters, including the transport select committee, to place a moratorium on land sales until the strategic rail authority is running. But Jackson says the transport acts of 1962 and 1968 oblige BR to obtain the best possible price for its assets. Odd, then, that BR assets valued at £8bn were transferred to Railtrack and sold for £1.8bn (not to mention the rolling-stock assets which also went for a song). The difference, of course, is that government direction can overrule those transport acts — and the present government sees potential growth of rail usage as insufficient justification for another overruling.

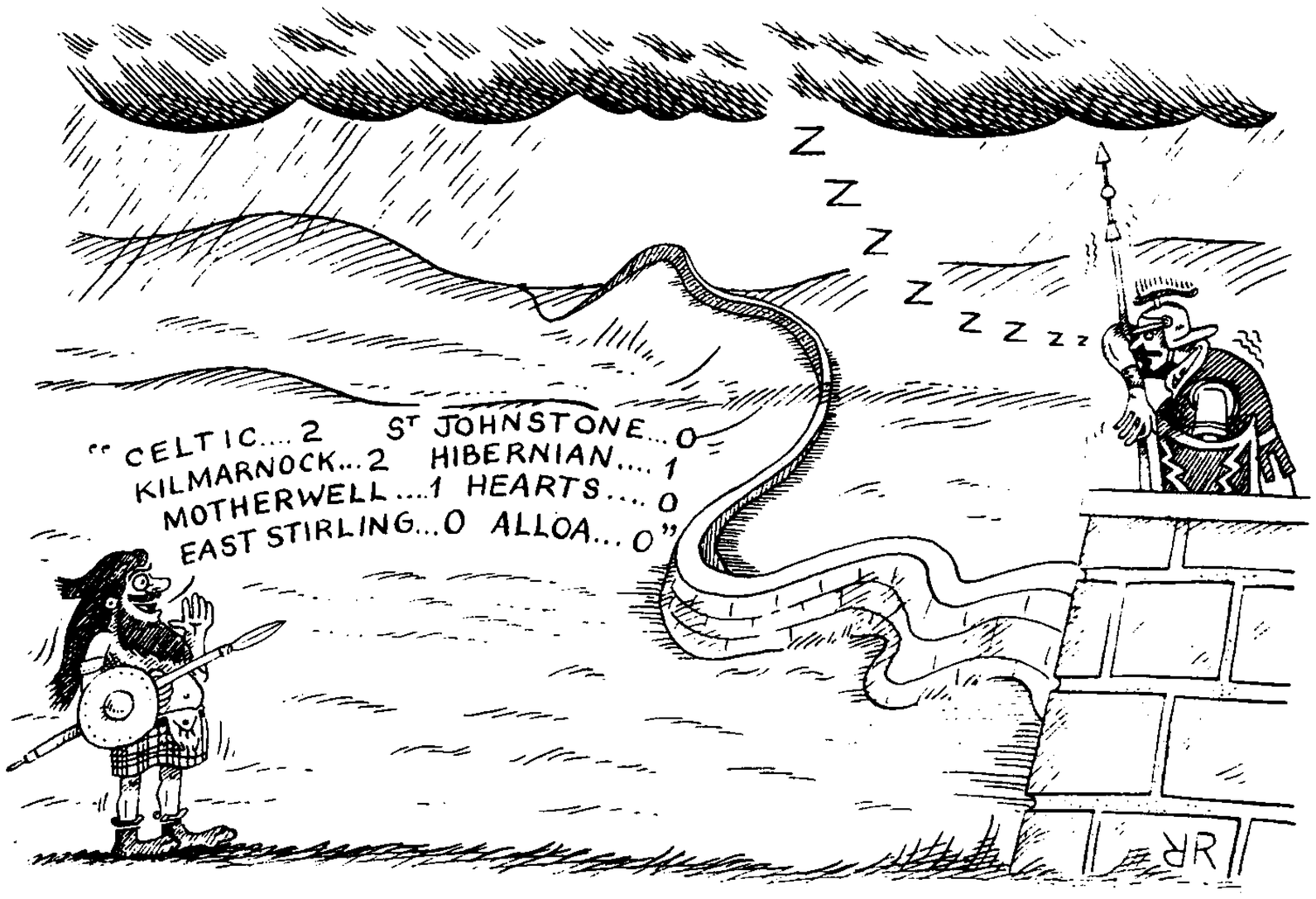
'Dr B. Ching'

88 Number crunchings

■ the percentage of trains run on time by Thames Trains last year

■ the number of times their original £10,000 investment that directors of Thames Trains will recoup when the company is sold off to the Go-Ahead group (i.e. £880,000 each)

Saturday afternoons could be particularly hellish up on the Wall...



Letters

Private Eye

Taking the Michael

Sir,

Re: Immigration Special, 17 April. You mistakenly suggest that Michael Shrimpton's opinions about the European Community make it inappropriate for him to hear asylum appeals as an adjudicator or chairman of the immigration appeal tribunal. As barristers specialising in immigration law, we know that Michael Shrimpton has a humane and compassionate approach to asylum cases — there is no hint of the xenophobia to which you refer. He is the only adjudicator to have referred a case to the European Court of Justice, a decision which shows he does not allow his political opinions to affect his judicial work.

Yours sincerely,
SIMON COX, JUDITH FARBEY & JOHN WALSH,

Temple, London EC4.

High roller

Sir,

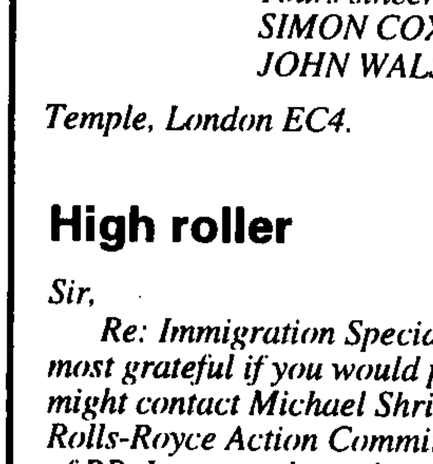
Re: Immigration Special (EYE *948). I should be most grateful if you would please advise me where I might contact Michael Shrimpton, leader of the Rolls-Royce Action Committee. As an ex-employee of RR, I am very keen that the company stays in British ownership and I wish to make a donation to Mr Shrimpton's very worthy cause.*

Thanking you in anticipation.

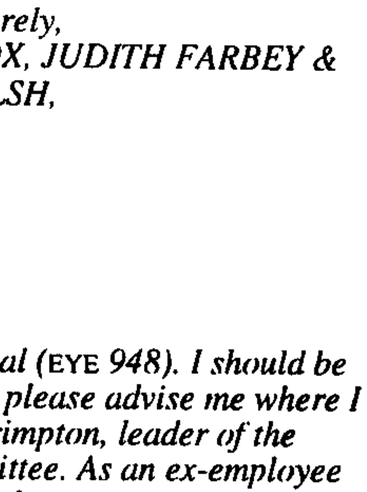
Faithfully,
CLIVE SMITH,

Milking Nook, Peterborough.

Lookalike



Ingrams



Father Jack

Sir,

*Am I alone in noticing the remarkable resemblance between the esteemed ex-*EYE *editor and eloquent columnist Father Jack, and that raving curmudgeon Richard Ingrams?*

As Ingrams would put it, Feck!

Yours,
CONOR LENNON,

Wokingham, Surrey.

Bridges falling down

Sir,

In reply to the letter from Leslie Glen (Mr) concerning E.J. Thribb, 17 and a fucking half, and his farewell poem for Lloyd Bridges, I did not see the poem (EYE *946). Mr Bridges may have been a devoted husband and father, even a gifted character actor, but this doesn't detract from the fact that during the communist witchhunt of Hollywood he sold many fine writers and equally gifted actors down the river. Many finer people stood firm and suffered during this terrible time, ah but not our devoted Mr Bridges.*

Yours sincerely,
LEILA PRICE,

Llanfechain, Powys.

Photo opportunity

Sir,

I see that in his SPECTATOR *Diary of 18 April, Mr Andrew Neil tells us that a Manhattan friend of his, when surfing the web to meet new girlfriends, contacts only those who include a picture on their site.*

I am wondering whether you know of any photograph of Mr Neil which, if he published it on his own site, would impress young ladies of his potential as a Romeo?

Yours faithfully,
J.S. HAWKER,

Brighton, Sussex.

Mann talk

Sir,

Re: Awards News. Thank you for publicising News Direct's well deserved CRE award which, incidentally, was for an entire year's coverage, some 50 reports in all. The notion that I somehow run Britain's busiest radio newsroom from some far flung holiday hideaway, however appealing, is not the case. Yet.

Kindest regards,
CHRIS MANN,

Editor, News Direct, c/o Sandy Lane, Barbados.

Eye spy

Sir,

Endlessly repeating a canard does not make it a fact.

In an otherwise interesting article on the bombing of the Israeli embassy in London (948), your writer states as fact that a spy in a terrorist organisation passed on a warning of the intended bombing of the Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie. This is not true, as exhaustive investigation has demonstrated. The results of those investigations were provided to PRIVATE EYE *by my office, in 1995.*

JOHN BURGESS,
Press Attaché,

Embassy of the United States of America.

O·B·N

Hurricane Richard hit the screens like a blast of fresh air and he must have sent viewers to bed chortling with delight *(Sky One, 10pm)*.

Outspoken *Sun* columnist Richard Littlejohn's bright new talk show, *Live and Unleashed*, was controversial, thought-provoking and compelling viewing from start to finish...

It was a great start for hilariously opinionated Richard whose knack of asking the most telling questions of the day works as well on screen as it does in print.

TIM EWBANK
Sun

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

Foot in it?

Sir,

Paul Foot (Who bombed the Israeli embassy?, EYE *948) writes that if "terrorists from Hezbollah or Hamas had been involved, their methods would have been very similar to those employed by the London bombers".*

In fact the opposite is true: Hamas don't attack targets outside the Middle East, a fact not even the Israelis dispute; Hezbollah would be most likely to send a suicide-bomber in a truck through the front door of the embassy; and no self-respecting Islamist group would use a woman to plant a bomb.

Foot shows similar ignorance about the cases of Samar Alami and Jawed Botmeh. He admits that the pair possessed two fully-constructed bombs (and materials to make more) at the time of their arrests, but fails to mention that they also had guns, ammunition and documents on terrorist methods and techniques. He fails to tell us that Alami used a false, Jewish-sounding name to obtain information about the Anglo-Jewish community, attended Jewish events in London and compiled lists of prominent British Jews. All this to send chemicals by remote-controlled plane to the West Bank?

The anti-Israel bombs in London in 1994 matched the modus operandi of secular, Marxist groups such as the PFLP, a violent Palestinian group with a history of attacks against Jewish communities in Europe, and which Samar Alami had applied to join prior to the bombings. It is hardly surprising that a jury did not believe the denials of a bomb-making Palestinian who covertly collected intelligence about Jews, had applied to join a Middle Eastern terrorist group and, despite claiming not to remember where she was at the time of the bombings, had still managed to keep the relevant EVENING STANDARD *press cuttings from that day. All this evidence was presented in court. Has the great investigative journalist Paul Foot lost his touch, or does he just have a political axe to grind?*

Yours,
ALEX NEWALL,

Via e-mail.

● **ARE YOU A WRITER?**
Frustrated, and don't know how to do it? Exciting New Correspondence Course available. SAE: Paul Fowler School Of Waiting, Cob Cottage, Low Street, Elston, Newark NG23 5PA. T

Exchange & Mart

A bit fishy

Sir,

I wonder if the Scottish Environment Protection Agency mentioned in your Down on the Fish Farm column (948) as never having brought "a single prosecution against any fish farmer in connection with anything" is in any way related to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency whose report to the procurator fiscal led to the successful prosecution this month of a fish farm in Shetland for illegal use of the chemical Cypermethrin, for which the company was fined £1,000?

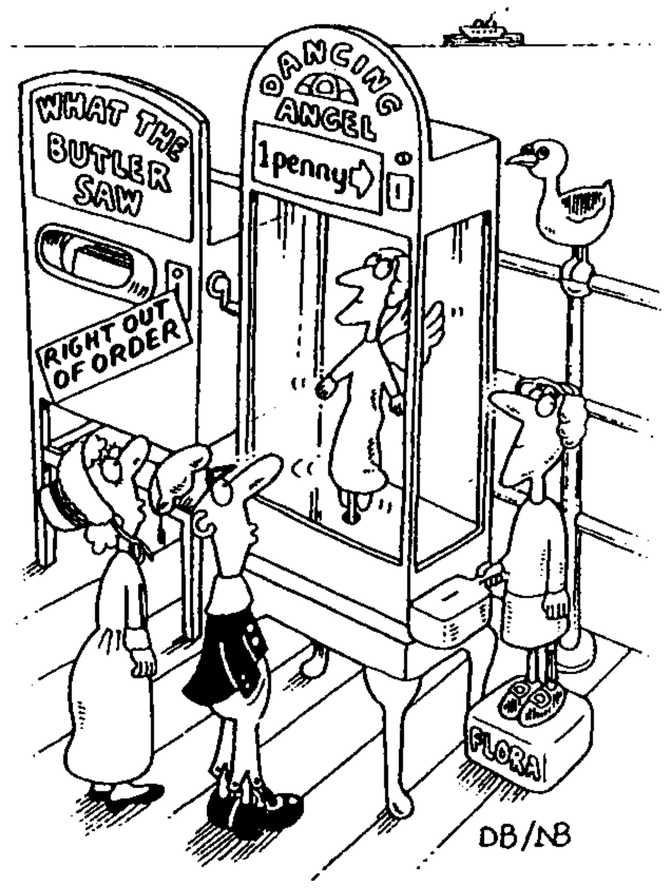
I think we should be told.

Yours,
COUNCILLOR MRS JENNIFER SHAW,

Chairman, SEPA North Region.

NEW OLD SAYINGS

Never say Di



EDS or tales?

Sir,

While we enjoy PRIVATE EYE*'s incisive column on EDS, in the interests of maintaining your columnist's high standards of investigative reporting we write to correct shum mishtakes in your 3 April issue.*

You state "everyone had to submit a tax return this year". Not so; only self-employed and those with complex tax affairs take part in self assessment. Employment has its down-sides, but among its advantages is the ability to delegate your tax affairs to your employer.

Your columnist is clearly way ahead of EDS, the Inland Revenue and the chancellor of the exchequer himself in announcing new systems for the merged CA and IR complete with in-built delays. With a target merger date of 1999 given in the budget, even new Labour couldn't have acted so quickly that new systems had been planned, tendered and contracted to a third party within three weeks of the budget.

The system which deals with contributions and which is (as you quite rightly point out) considerably delayed is NIRS2. This is **not** *developed by EDS, is already at least one year late (even in its current reduced form) and the full system is likely to be much later.*

In contrast, EDS has worked with the Inland Revenue to deliver and implement the self assessment system slightly ahead of schedule.

We hope this helps to keep your reporting standards ahead of the pack.

Yours faithfully,
MARIAN FREEMAN,

EDS UK PR Manager, Uxbridge, Middlesex.

YOBS
HUSBAND
Hang about... Look Who's just come in
BAR
Oi.. Remember me Doctor?!
Er.. no sorry.
You bleedin' should. You gave me a slappin' when I was born!

I-SPY

New York

Submitted by Ben Smith. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

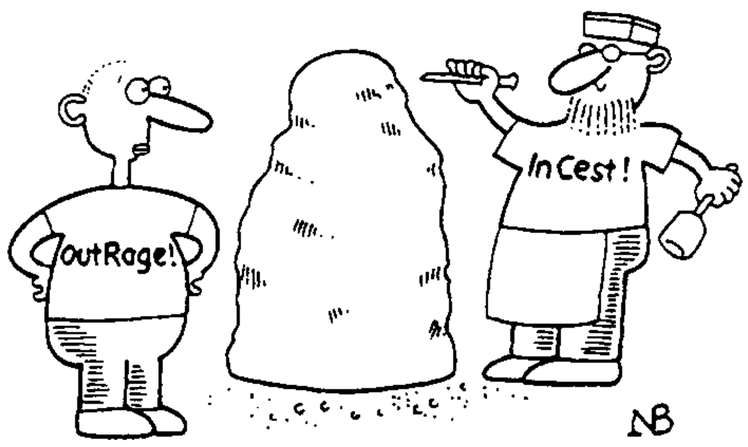
Chorus of disapproval

Sir,

The Bridgewater Hall has lousy acoustics — sez who? I have listened to Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto Carmina Burana, Respighi's Pines Of Rome, Saint-Saens No3, Shostakovich's No7 and many other varied pieces of music at Bridgewater and have thoroughly enjoyed them all. The acoustics are fine and my qualifications for saying so are better than yours because not only do I subscribe to your little rag I also wear a bow tie, drink claret and take the SPECTATOR.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID PIMBLETT,

Horbury, W. Yorks.



History lesson

Sir,

Simon Wormleighton challenges the EYE *(948) to state when and where Fred West was convicted of murder, arguing that in the absence of such data, you criminally libelled his reputation by referring to him as a "murderer". This argument is so inept as to be unworthy even of the term pedantry. So Hitler, Stalin et al cannot be called "murderers" because they were never convicted at trial? Perhaps Mr Wormleighton is unaware of an academic pursuit known as "history", in which one makes judgements upon past events and people based upon the available evidence. In democratic societies, the right to offer an opinion of "history" is generally recognised; but, acceptance of such judgements rise or fall upon the quality of evidence available (dead women and children, and signed confessions, say.)*

TRISTAN BRITTAIN-DISSONT,

London.

Rabid Badger-baiting

Sir,

As much as I enjoy the stupidity and hypocrisy exposed in Street of Shame, the piece about the "fading rock rag NME*" (actually much improved by the recent lick of paint) was badly informed and thus compromised your usually successful formula for ridiculing sycophancy and nepotism.*

The "bedroom based Rabid Badger" label is in fact an offshoot of the small label "Fierce Panda" (need I point out the "pun"?) run by the same Mr S. Williams. It has existed for a few years now, during which time its releases have been extensively and enthusiastically reviewed in the NME*, and also in its sister rag* MELODY MAKER *(which Mr Williams would only have to nip upstairs to from his desk at the* NME *in order to effect coverage).*

Favouritism and networking in the music business? I'm shocked.

Yours sincerely,
MATT HARRIS,

London SE14.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"We don't want to see hookers going down on players."
STUART BARNES, Sky Sports
(Bobby Cullagh)

"The World Cup is every four years, so it's going to be a perennial problem."
GARY LINEKER, Radio 4
(Nick Corder)

"Winning is everything, but only the losers know how that feels."
Boat Race Commentator, BBC1
(Sue Winwood)

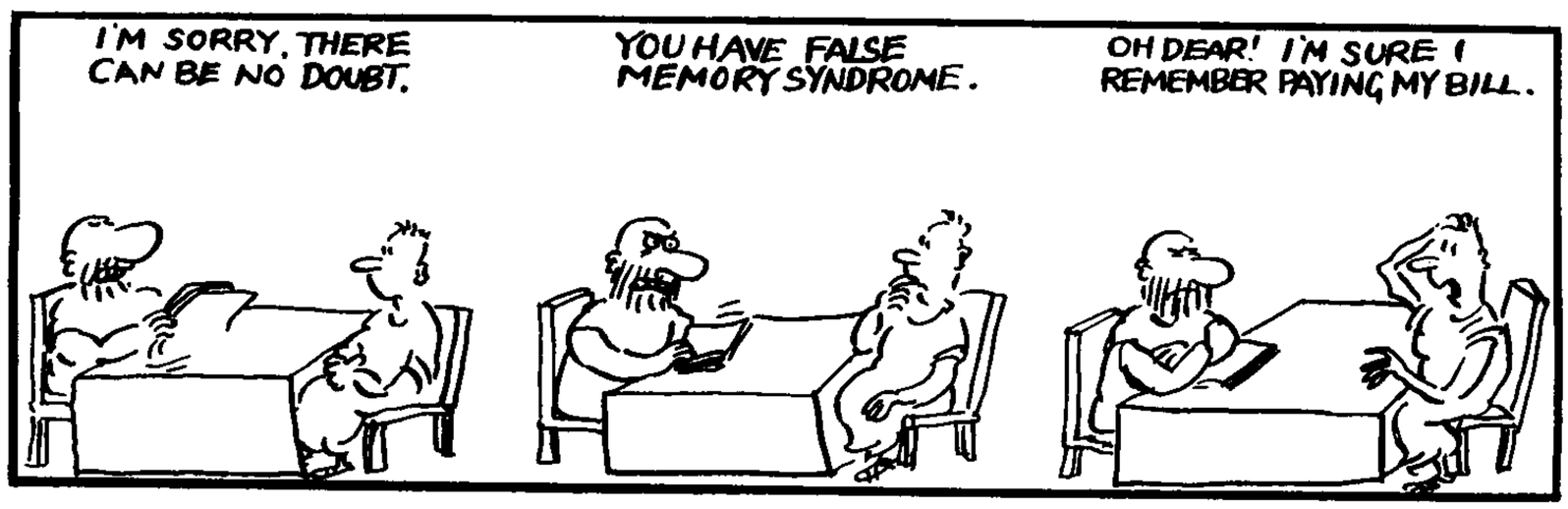
"Punch is a humorous magazine."
JERRY HAYES, BBC2
(Jim Loughran)

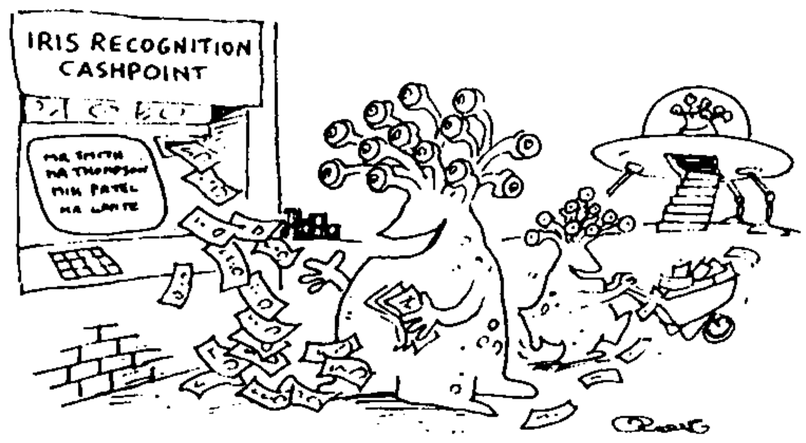
Oz Clarke: *So, you've won the British Avant-Garde Hairdresser of the Year Award — what does that mean?*

Hairdresser: *Well, it means I'm the British Avant-Garde Hairdresser of the Year.*
BBC1
(Clare Munks)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN





Letter from **Phnom Penh**

from Our Own Correspondent

SINCE Pol Pot was dragged from his hut in the jungle last July, tried for betraying the movement (but not for murdering 1.5 million people) and sentenced to life imprisonment in a hut in the jungle, the Khmer Rouge really began to fall apart.

The man who overthrew Pol Pot was his former righthand man, the one legged "butcher", Ta Mok. Being an old fashioned sort of guy, Ta Mok enforced the Maoist principles of collectivism and bans on commerce. This put him severely out of sync with his commanders and men, who were feeling the pinch resulting from a ban on the export of logs by the Thai government, and who were erring towards good old modern capitalism. (It should be remembered that Mok himself became a self-made millionaire by selling logs to Thailand and investing in a sawmill, hotel and petrol station in the nearby Thai town of Khukan.)

One of the final straws came when Ta Mok ordered his commanders to take the tin roofs off their houses as this was a sign of wealth, but kept his own roof and Thai-supplied satellite dish. Presumably he subscribed to Murdoch's Star TV network. Ironically, it was the now disgraced and out of work Pol Potists who led the March 1998 overthrow of Ta Mok, which led to his dash for the hills and the subsequent and much welcomed demise of his former boss, Brother No1. Thus it is the Pol Potists who are the heroes of the day.

The defectors' leader, Ke Pauk, is reckoned to be responsible for the deaths of more than 100,000 Cambodians. The Khmer Rouge's former foreign minister Ieng Sary has autonomy over the western border areas. Mam Nay, one of Ieng Sary's neighbours, was the chief interrogator at the notorious Tuol Sleng torture centre where 18,000 or so men, women and children went in, confessed their crimes and were killed. Former Khmer Rouge cadres in our beloved government now hold the posts of second prime minister, interior minister, finance minister and a host of generalships.

But the virtual collapse of the Khmer Rouge over the past weeks is great news for our country — maybe we can get some sort of peace. In any event, our own army will no longer have the excuse of a civil war to provide a cover to its main activity, which is illegal logging — worth a minimum US$184m last year; equivalent to 44 percent of our national budget. I guess they'll have to be more up front about what they really do. Furthermore, the defected Khmer Rouge still have their guns, and they only defected as they were promised a slice of the logging cake by our two prime ministers, themselves not averse to dealing in black market logs.

So as things stand, the civil war may be approaching its end, leaving Cambodia a country shell shocked, traumatised and effectively ruled by thousands of armed men who have absolute control of territory; no change there, then! But rather than following the agrarian revolution of Pol Pot, they will strip the country of its forests and intimidate or shoot anyone who stands in the way while ensuring that their boss and patron, second prime minister Hun Sen, wins July's elections.

Meanwhile, the political and military bosses, KR and all, will swim and play golf at the luxury "Le Royal Hotel Phnom Penh", owned by the wife of former Thai PM General Chavalit, who made her money from log trading with the Khmer Rouge. That's the nice thing about Cambodia — there's some kind of symmetry.

PS: The latest Cambodian joke says the evil man responsible for killing thousands of Cambodian civilians in the 1970s is actually *alive* and in America. His name is Henry Kissinger.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "I would have won the tournament if Ngan's breasts had not led me astray," declared Robert Crowley after being eliminated from the South Australian state chess championships. "Every time she moved a piece, she leaned forward and deliberately flashed her boobies at me, and I lost my concentration. That is the only reason she was able to fork me with her bishop."

Defending her appearance, twenty-four-year-old Miss Ngan Koshnitsky said: "Yes, I like wearing sexy clothes, with revealing tops that show off my cleavage,

but so what? What I wear at tournaments shouldn't be an issue at all. It makes me angry that he didn't think I was good enough to win. I believe most men just can't accept losing against a woman."

But Crowley was unrepentant. "It was only her flesh that beat me. Those clothes were suitable for a disco, not a chess tournament. I did everything I could to resist. I even put my hands across my forehead and turned my head, but that didn't work. If I ever have to play her again, I shall have to consider wearing a wide-brimmed hat." *(Brisbane Courier Mail, 2/4/98. Spotter: Norm Reynolds)*

— ● —

● "It was an incredibly dense thing for Tim to do," Tim Ekelman's girlfriend told reporters outside the Trauma Unit at St. Joseph's Hospital, Hamilton. "I mean, I love him with all my heart — but what a jerk.

"About three months ago, he saw a demonstration by a professional sword swallower called Ed 'The Sword Swallower' Robinson. Ever since that night, he's been obsessed with sword-swallowing, and he kept boasting that he was going to learn, turn professional and call himself 'the gobbling Zorro'. But the only time I saw Tim try to do it, he only used a little plastic toy sword, and even then he scratched the inside of his throat, and couldn't eat for three days. He went out last night to buy some bread and milk, and stopped at a friend's house for a beer on the way back. The friend had a metre-long ceremonial Japanese sword on his wall, and he dared Tim to swallow it. Apparently Tim did, and when he got back home there was blood pouring out of his mouth, his neck and face were swollen, and he could hardly breathe. The doctors here say he's in a critical but stable condition, with a sliced throat, a collapsed lung, a pierced esophagus, and a damaged voice box."

Ed 'The Sword Swallower' Robinson later told reporters: "The guy must be crazy. I usually spend upwards of two weeks carefully taking the edge off a sword before I'd dare put it into my mouth. It's got to be perfectly dull and smooth enough to run it right across your tongue, which is exactly what I do at the start of each act. Anyone who says they use a sharp sword is a lying sack of boll weevils." *(Calgary Herald [Canada], 21/3/98. Spotter: Steve Jones)*

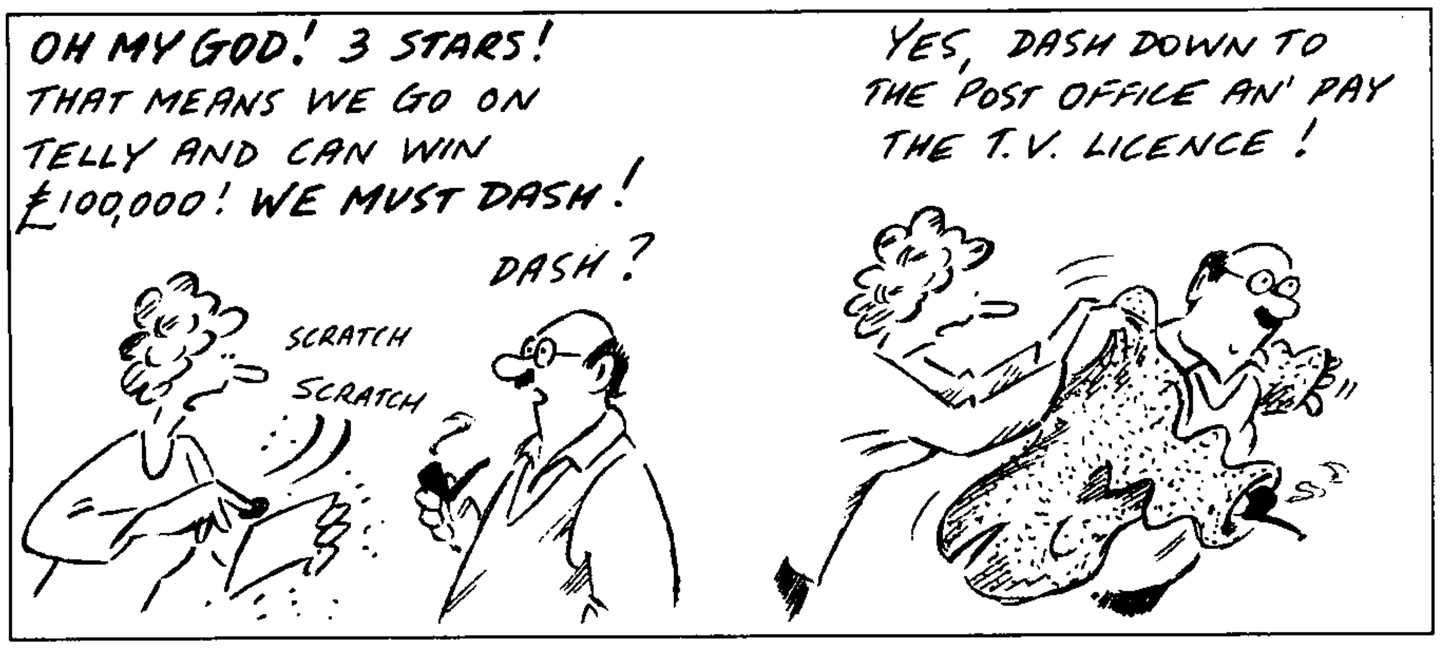
— ● —

● *"Boris Yeltsin loves a good time. He is fond of traditional drinking songs, and is a good instrumentalist. Yeltsin's sense of rhythm is good and he is a good player on the spoons. Even on official trips, he would demand 'bring spoons!' Yeltsin's favourite trick was to play knick-knack-paddy-whack with his spoons on the head of Yuri Zagainov, the chief of the President's administrative department. At first, he would beat on his own leg, as is usually done, and then he would beat loudly on the head of his subordinate. The latter did not dare to take offence, and just smiled affectedly. On one occasion, Yeltsin took aside the president of one of the former Soviet states, Askar Akayev of Kyrgistan, and played the spoons on his head. He could torture one to death with this musical instrument."* (Aleksandr Korzhakov, quoted in *The New York Review*, 9 April 1998. Spotter: Michael Morris)

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

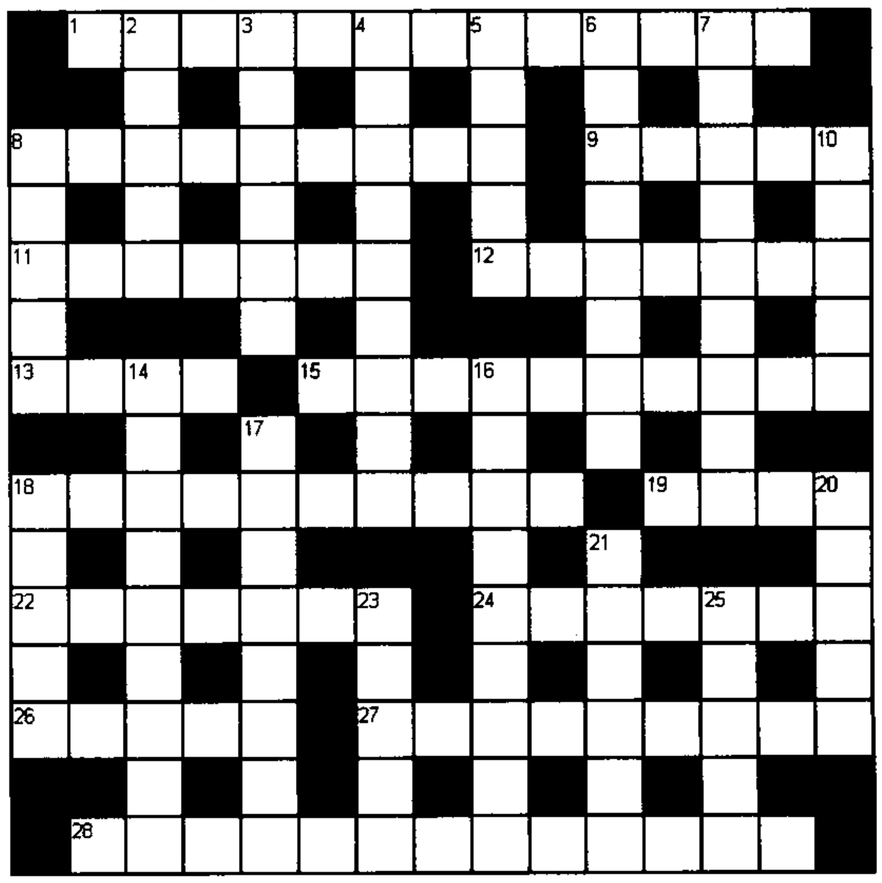
The Lottery Winners

TURNER


OH MY GOD! 3 STARS!
THAT MEANS WE GO ON TELLY AND CAN WIN £100,000! WE MUST DASH!
DASH?
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
YES, DASH DOWN TO THE POST OFFICE AN' PAY THE T.V. LICENCE!

EYE CROSSWORD 104

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS
1 Frigid Brenda's crafty extravagance no longer presents a trendy image of this country (4,9)
8 A tight pain in the arse is a real nuisance in public (5,4)
9 It's good to go on about things: many a knight's cherished objective (5)
11 Blairzone: cool, Zen-oriented — there's one inside (7)
12 Twins embarrassed about sex — nerds! (7)
13 Scraps banks (4)
15 Not Maggie's type, comprehensive party wrecker (3,7)
18 Plenty of cleavage evident from this destroyer of reputations? (7-3)
19 Complaint: the rest of Europe won't take ours! (4)
22 Hand job bloke (7)
24 This sort of sandwich a big hit (7)
26 Swindle southern softie (5)
27/10 A couple of blokes who can no longer score getting pissed (6,3,5)
28 "No Ecstasy left? Everyone's into crack plus a bit of heroin!", as this star might say? (4,9)

DOWN
2 Maybe your member's investing a lot of money in Algerian port (5)
3 Linesman no longer endlessly mucking about (6)
4 La Bollard left in hen-house by Teddy (9)
5 Giant boob over article (5)
6 Capital cover for one about to retire (8)
7 Having a problem being popular next to one, Branson, maybe (2,1,6)
8 File put out by Blair finally, a long-term con (5)
10 (see 27)
14 Tool pear shaped after starting wank — what a game! (5,4)
16 Boycott takes jet to have sex abroad (9)
17 Scandalous rehabilitated lush accepts fame corrupted (8)
18 Warmongering politicians' gobs (5)
20 Shrink wrap rook in bad blood (5)
21 Spice girl after head (6)
23 In Bavaria, Bundestag upset an old part of Egypt (5)
25 Bad lad Kelvin on church body! (5)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 8.5.98. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 103

Winner: PETER WEDDERBURN

ACROSS: 1/15/22/8/26 The Ayes to the right the Noes to the left 6 Blast 9 Urethra 10 Entitle 11 Patio 12 Hot potato 13 Tory party 16 Sofas 18 Lille 19 Telephoto 21 Adrenalin 23 Roses 25 Organdy 26 (see 1ac) 27 Totty 28 O. J. Simpson.

DOWN: 1 Trump 2 Electoral 3 Yahoo 4 Smasher 5 Overtly 6 Bottoms up 7 Astra 8 (see 1ac) 13 Talk about 14 Pregnancy 15 (see 1ac) 17 Frogs legs 19 Tally-ho 20 Linctus 22 (see 1ac) 23 Rheum 24 Satan.

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hi!

Well, I can't believe it!

It's been a whole year since Cherie and I first moved into the vicarage, to take over what I always hoped we could turn into the best parish in the world!

And my goodness me, what a long way we've moved towards that goal in a mere twelve months!

I know the Good Book says that we shouldn't blow our own trumpets *(Book of Jericho, 8.17)*. But it's pretty tempting, isn't it! Just think of some of the things we've been able to do in what they are calling "the Vicar's First 365 Days":

● We've got agreement that tobacco advertising should be banned from the parish newsletter in ten years' time.

● The Millennium Tent Project is well on course (whatever the critics may like to say!). Full credit to Mr Mandelson on this one — well done Peter!

● We have set up over 100 new parish committees, to review everything from the flower roster to the roster for flowers.

● At St Albion's Primary School, Mr Blunkett has enforced his new voluntary code for 2½ hours' compulsory computer homework for the reception class.

● We have restructured our giving programme to target only the more deserving members of the congregation.

● Mr Lairg has done a superb job in refurbishing his office — an admirable use of parish funds!

● We have appointed a parish "drugs supremo" Mr Halliwell (formerly PC Halliwell) to look into the vexed problem of teenage drug-taking in the parish.

● Cherie and I have reached out into the local youth community with our programme of sherry parties for members of local pop groups such as Shooting Up, Hardline, Big E and the Coke Boys.

● Plans are well in hand for my Millennium Tent (which, contrary to what you may have heard down at the Britannia Arms, is going to be a triumph!). "The vicar is not mocked" *(John 18.8)*.

● The Mission to Northern Ireland, led by myself (thanks to Mrs Mowlam too, of course), has finally borne fruit. I have done all the spadework, and now it's up to

the rest of you to make it happen!

● My sermon after the tragic death in a car crash of Diana, the Princess of Wales, really brought the whole community together in a way that has never happened before. I had so many letters on that one!!

All these things have been tremendously exciting. But even more exciting is the way, as I go round the parish, that I sense a new spirit abroad — vibrant, pivotal, modern, forward-looking. I myself have never used the phrase "Swinging St Albion's". But when I talk to the ever-increasing number of overseas visitors to our parish, they always say to me "Gosh, vicar, isn't St Albion's a really swinging place these days? When we came here, we expected to see all the men in bowler hats, drinking warm beer and playing cricket.

"But, in reality, what is the reality? The Full Monty's showing in the local Virgin Cinema for yet another week. The Spice Girls are still the No.1 favourite in the Youth Club disco. And at last there is a vicar who's not afraid to wear jeans and trainers at parish coffee mornings."

As we all sang at a recent Evensong:

"Things are changing, things are moving,
Everywhere you go.
St Albion's is really swinging
It's where it's at, you know!"

©Words and Music, T. Blair
(with optional guitar accompaniment)

Yours for another 20 years!!

Tony

YOU WRITE...

Dear Sir,

When the new vicar came to our sixth-form general studies course last year, I thought he was really great. Someone who was on the same wavelength as us young people, who cared about the environment, world peace and socialism. But having seen him over the last year, I now think he is a complete

Yours sincerely

Ben Elton, The Common Room,
St Albion Sixth Form Studies Block

■ The editor Mr Campbell reserves the right to cut any letters for reasons of space, and also to ensure that Master Elton will never ever again in his life be invited to the vicarage for sherry, or indeed any other beverage.

To Remember In Your Prayers

Mr Robinson, who is again the victim of an unscrupulous whispering campaign in the parish linking his name with the waitress in the La Gondola restaurant in the High Street. Also your prayers are asked for my very good friend Mr Murdoch, from the Adult Magazine Centre, who has been abandoned by his wife. TB.

Home Bible Study

The Vicar's Recommendation For This Month

Deuteronomy

1. And, lo, Moses led the children of Israel into the promised land, which was flowing with milk and honey.

2. And it was also full of other people who had got there first, even the Arabites, the Arafites, the Hezbollites, the Hamasites and all the tribes of the land of Palestine.

3. And Moses saith unto his people, "Ye are to go over into this land and take it for your own. And you are to show no mercy to the Arabites, the Arafites and all those others I have just mentioned."

4. And there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth.

5. And the leaders of the Arafites, Arabites and all the others listed above, saith likewise unto their people, so that the smiting should begin.

6. But then there came unto them a certain wise man from afar, who saith unto both sides, "Look, there is another way which I shall show unto you, even the third way.

7. "Let us all sitteth round the table, even as the locust shall sit down with the scorpion, and the leopard shall lie down with the cockatrice, and thrash this one out in a positive and constructive way."

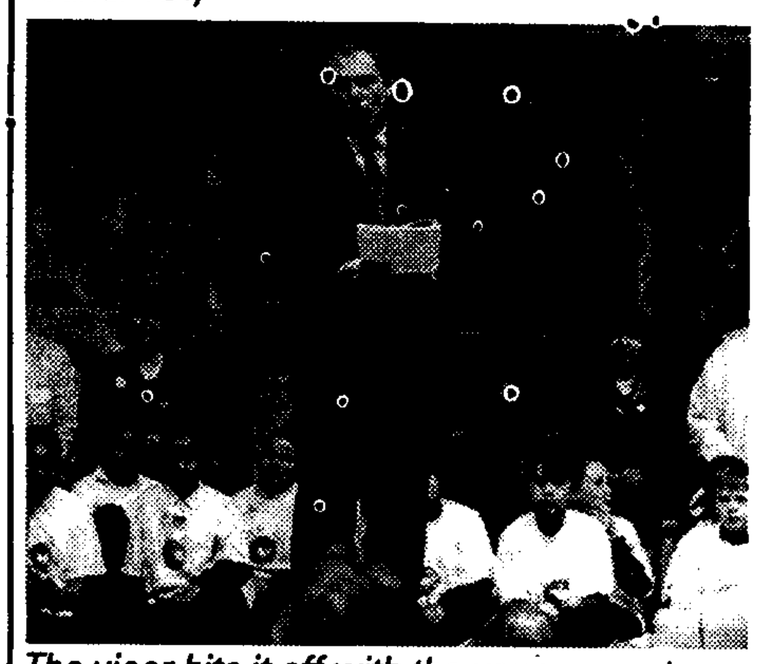
8. And the stranger saith unto them "Lo, I am the third way, the truth and the life."

9. And so came there peace unto the land of Israel, or Palestine, according to your point of view, which are both equally valid.

Taken from the St Albion's Bible Today (adapted T. Blair)

NOTES

■ The parish will not be celebrating the old-fashioned pagan festival of May Day (sometimes known as "Old Labour Day"). Instead, at the suggestion of Mr Mandelson, we will be updating the whole idea and naming the holiday "Blair Day" to mark the exact day when Tony took over! (Thanks! And blushes all round! TB.)



The vicar hits it off with the young people

DIANA MEMORIAL TRUST SPLIT BY FEUD

'It's what she would have wanted'

by Our Diana Staff **Dame Flora Margarine**

THE Memorial Trust Fund set up to preserve the memory of the late Princess of Wales is reported to be riven with factions, splits and bitter acrimony as family members bicker over *how best to remember the princess.*

"I think it is a mark of the Fund's success," said Chairman Mr Anthony Julius, "that we have captured the spirit of her life at our meetings. They are full of tears, tantrums, wild accusations, half-baked ideas and broken marriages such as my own."

Lord Mishcon is 107.

ON OTHER PAGES

Diana's chauffeur's sister-in-law tells her story **2, 3, 4, 5, 6**

Pin-up commemorative poster of Royal watcher James Whitaker looking very fat **7**

Diana's bodyguard still can't remember whatever it was **94**

Plus new tasteful competition: Eat ten tubs of Flora Lo-Fat Spread and win a white Fiat Uno!

SALLY JOCKSTRAP
Winner Sportswriter of the Year

Jimmy White has had his problems, but it was good to see him make his name as a heavyweight by knocking out Chris Eubank in 3 hours 90 minutes. Now he can go on to bring back gold for Britain in the World Cup!

I AM second to none in my appreciation of David Coulthard, so I was delighted to see him coast past the post at Westminster Bridge in the fastest Marathon time this year — an incredible three goals to nil!

Talking of the World Cup, did you get any tickets this year? I rang Wimbledon all day, only to be told by some snotty woman who couldn't speak French that rain had stopped play! In the words of Baddiel and Skinner's hit golf anthem, "Men of Harlech in the hollow..." *(That's enough. Ed.)*

● *Sally Jockstrap is now Editor of the Daily Express.*

ADVERTISEMENTS

Do you want to be a successful author?

Publishing houses are always looking for new talent. There are always openings for people who have a genuine ability to murder other people, particularly if the murder is done in an original and controversial way.

If you feel that you could be a best-selling murderer, send details of your previous convictions to: PO Box No. 94, The Mary Bell Estate, London.

HOLLICK
- FOR SOUND SLEEP

Now with added Cannabis Resin and Rosie Hip Syrup

Directions for use: Simply open Daily Express and fall asleep

ENGLAND GETS FAITH HEALER

That University Challenge Sizzler

THE SUN's Ten Questions That We'd Like To Ask Britain's Brightest Blonde From M-m-m-agdalen Corr-lege in Sexford!!

1. Your starter for ten thousand pounds: *Would you like to get your kit off, love?*

2. Er...

3. That's it.

IN THE OTHER PAPERS

HOW the Sun disgracefully tried to exploit Oxford's Sizzling Egghead — full colour pix and interview by Glendana di Slaggiano.

"It's all in the Soaraway Sunday Telegraph."

"Since it's so amusing, perhaps you'd like to share the joke with the rest of us"

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Welcome to the International Lairg Hotel

Concierge Mrs Dewar welcomes you to your suite

RECENTLY refurbished at a cost of £600,000 the luxurious Lord Chancellor Suite is now available for private and corporate bookings.

This highly desirable and luxurious suite contains the following exquisite design features:

■ Genuine flock wallpaper (Pineapple and Acorn Bhaji design) as seen in the finest Indian restaurants.

■ Genuine faded crimson carpet formerly the property of the West Midlands Railway Hotel, Stockport, emblazoned with original 1943 BR logo.

■ Beautiful silk-style bedcover previously used as drawing room curtains in the Sunset Home For The Elderly, Storrington, Sussex.

All the furnishings have been supplied by Messrs B and Q Doitall of The Home Furnishing Emporium in Milton Keynes – advised by Tristram Shyster (PVC) from the Gracious Living Association of Bond Street, Chelmsford.

■ PLUS TV, minibar, tea and coffee machine, in-house direct phone to the Prime Minister.

Relax and enjoy the sumptuous comfort of Lairg luxury. You won't regret it – after all it's your money.

Lairg Hotels PLC
(a division of The Labour Party)

To obtain your full colour brochure send immediately to:
Trust House Lairg, Isle of Dull, Scotland.

1815: THE NEWS FROM WATERLOO REACHES ENGLAND

AMERICAN WOMAN DEAD

Husband 'very upset'

by Our Entire Staff **Phil Space**

AN American woman who lived in Sussex has died in California (or possibly Arizona), it was reported last night.

As the news broke, the entire nation went into a state of shock, according to News At Ten and the rest of the media.

The woman's Liverpool-born husband was reported to be "deeply upset", in a statement carried on the front page of every newspaper.

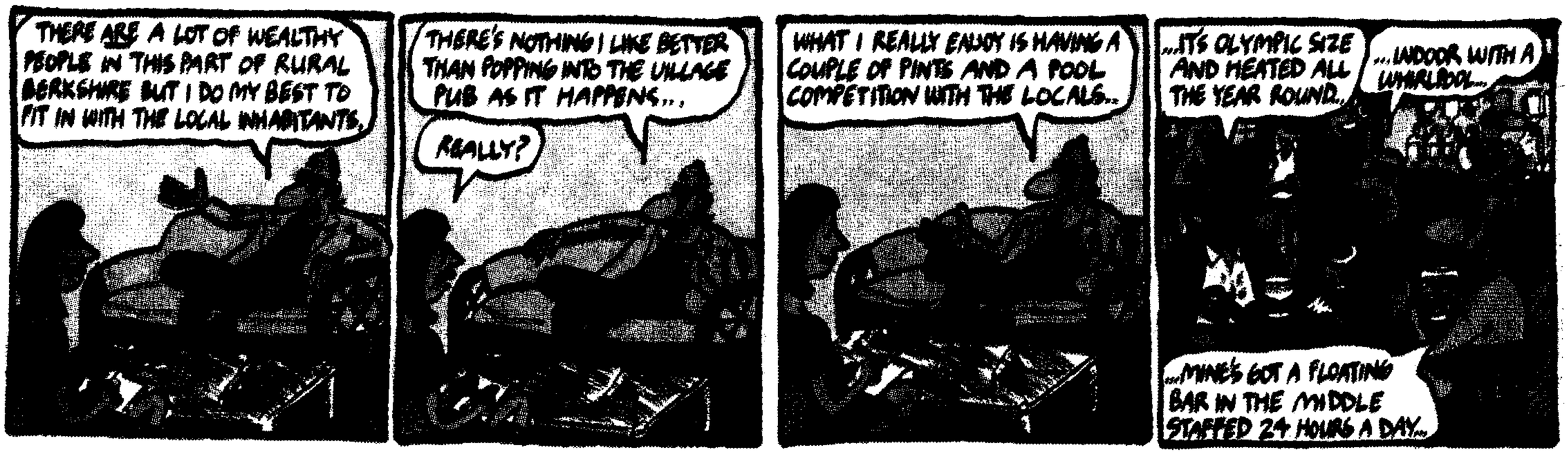
The Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair last night broke off his peacemaking trip to the Middle East to pay a personal tribute to the American woman who was married to the man from Liverpool.

Lindiana

"Not since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, has anyone commanded the affection of the British people like the American woman who was married to the man from Liverpool.

"She has indelibly left her mark on all our lives and stamped us with her indomitable spirit and her vision of a better, healthier, more positive Britain."

ON OTHER PAGES: Linda — A Life In Pictures pp 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. The Animals She Loved pp. 12-15. How She Changed A Nation's Diet pp. 16-18. The Linda I Knew by Glenda Lee-Mooney. What Happens When We Die by Dr Thomas Utterfraud. PLUS Hundreds of other Exclusive Features and Pictures exploiting the death of the American woman to the full.


THERE ARE A LOT OF WEALTHY PEOPLE IN THIS PART OF RURAL BERKSHIRE BUT I DO MY BEST TO FIT IN WITH THE LOCAL INHABITANTS.
THERE'S NOTHING I LIKE BETTER THAN POPPING INTO THE VILLAGE PUB AS IT HAPPENS...
REALLY?
WHAT I REALLY ENJOY IS HAVING A COUPLE OF PINTS AND A POOL COMPETITION WITH THE LOCALS..
...IT'S OLYMPIC SIZE AND HEATED ALL THE YEAR ROUND.
...INDOOR WITH A WIMBLEDON...
...MINE'S GOT A FLOATING BAR IN THE MIDDLE STAFFED 24 HOURS A DAY...

Yes! It's Britain's

BLAIRZONE

Newest Fanzine

Band Nooz

TONE GOES HEAVY METAL!

Forget gold and silver records — Blairzone's latest offering has gone plutonium! Heavy or what! Tone and the have been secretly working on their new project in America.

Says Tone, "It's live! It's dangerous! It'll make your ears bleed and then your hair fall out."

Imagine something sounding a bit like Judas Priest played by Kiss with Hawkwind on rhythm and Metallica on guitar — that's about half as deadly as what Tone is going to be pumping out at the big launch in Scotland!

"You should see our new drums," says Tone. "They're so wicked that no other civilised country will allow them to be imported!"

"This stuff," he reckons, "will change your half-life." Hea-veee!

Trax

Top Trax on Tone's Plutonium Album

★ Georgia On My Mind by Doun Reay Charles

☆ ***Atomic by Blandie***

★ Achtung Barmy by U32

☆ ***All we are saying (is don't give Greenpeace a chance) by The Blairtles***

Tone's High Grade Thought For The Environment

In the words of the late great Hollies, "It ain't heavy, it's uranium." Think about it.

PARTY ON TONE!

Blairzone is one sensational year old today! And people all over the world are celebrating the moment when Tone burst onto the scene with his inimitable version of the blues. It's been one hell of a crazy, rollercoaster year, but Tone has got one simple message for his millions of adoring fans:

"Who put the doop in the doop-de-doo-de-doop? And who put the shang in the shang-a-lang-a-lang? I did."

Rock and Roll on, the next twenty years!

SOCCER

NEASDEN HIRES FAITH MASSEUSE

by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man With Two Tickets For La Traviata and No Tickets For The World Cup

THE soccer world was rocked to its foundations last night when it was revealed that Ron Knee, Neasden's born-again soccer supremo, has hired the services of a local "faith masseuse", Miss Karen Sharon, 51.

Said Knee, "Morale is at an all-time low. The lads need their confidence restored, and frankly I'm willing to go down any road to end the Squirrels' goal-famine which leaves us rooted to the floor of the North Circular Division."

Relief Road Back

Who is she, the 59-year-old ex-barmaid who now literally holds the destiny of the Squirrels in her hands?

Last night I spoke to her in her "therapy centre" at the Rub-u-like Sauna and Massage Parlour at 239c, Safeway Road.

"My clients tell me I have magic hands," she said, "and now the team will have magic feet.

"My job in life is to help punters who cannot score, with the aid of oils and aromatic massage."

Blow Football

But Neasden fans Sid and Doris Bonkers are taking a sceptical view of Madame Sharon's "hands-on" technique.

"It would take more than some miracle worker to get that lot up and running. If they wanted an old lady to run her hands over the lads, my missus would have done it better and for nothing."

LATE SCORE

Man Utd 0

Neasden FC 1

(Beckham o.g.)

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THOSE FILTHY FROG FONE LINES!

If YOU want to complain about spending the whole day on the phone trying to get through to the French Football Authorities then phone the GNOME MORON HOT LINE on 0898 7354625.

★PLUS

We are offering free tickets to the World Cup for the first 100,000 callers!

★PHONE NOW!

WARNING

The Gnome Moron Hot Line is manned by two part-time Belgian operators who speak only Walloon. Calls may be subject to some delay. All calls charged at £95 a minute (peak rate) or £195 (standard).

How The Murdoch Press Would Have Covered That Murdoch Separation. What You Will Not Read

THE Sun

Friday, May 1, 1998 28p DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN

BLONDE SEX BOMB DUMPS AUSSIE PORN KING

by Our News Staff
KELVIN MCFILTHIE

Gorgeous, pouting stunnah of the type Dirty Rupe is now free to go off and have nooky with.

THE WORLD's top filth merchant Rupe Murdoch, 68, alias "the Dirty Digger", has been kicked out by his sex-starved missus.

Busty, Estonian-born Anna (38-28-38) did not tell the Sun last night: "I've had enough — or rather I haven't!

"My old man's never home for nooky — he'd rather spend his nights setting up complex cable deals in Szechuan than coming back for a love romp in one of our luxury homes."

Black Underwear

The marriage first hit the rocks when Dirty Rupe left lovely Anna all alone in her Manhattan lovenest for weeks on end.

"I was so bored I took to wandering round in my negligée, wondering how to fill up my lonely hours.

"Then a friend said, 'Why not write a dirty book?' — so I did.

Steamy Sex Session

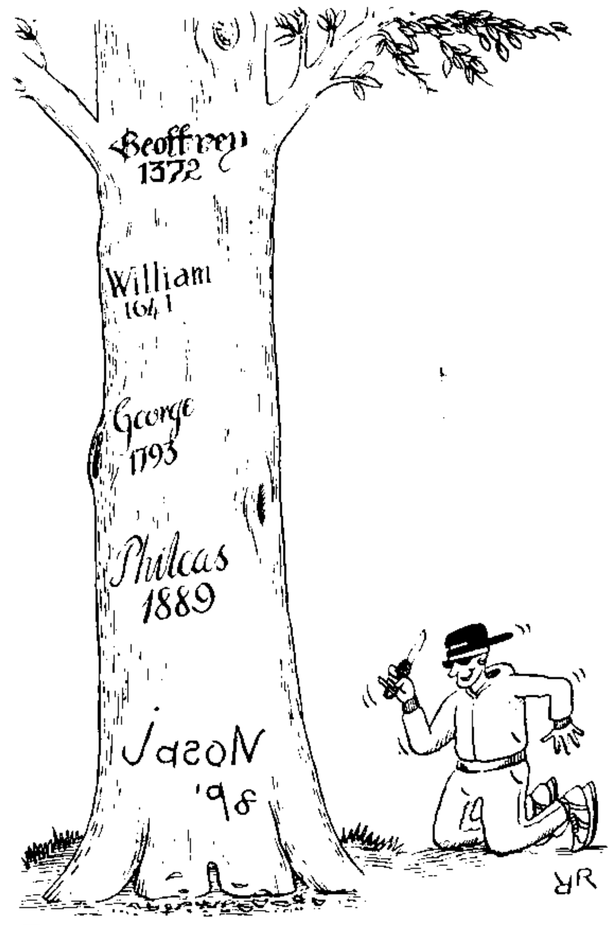
"But when I showed it to Rupe he was gobsmacked. He said, 'This is filth — I would not even put it in the News of the World.' No wonder I gave him the boot. What a bastard!"

Last night Mr Murdoch was unavailable for comment because we didn't dare ring him up.

THE SUN DOESN'T SAY

CLEAR off, you dirty old dingo. Get back down under where you belong.

Anyone who could ignore a gorgeous blonde sizzler like Anna, when she's clearly gasping for it, must be stark staring bonkers!



POETRY CORNER

Lines on the Death of Sir Ronald Miller, chief jokewriter to Mrs Thatcher

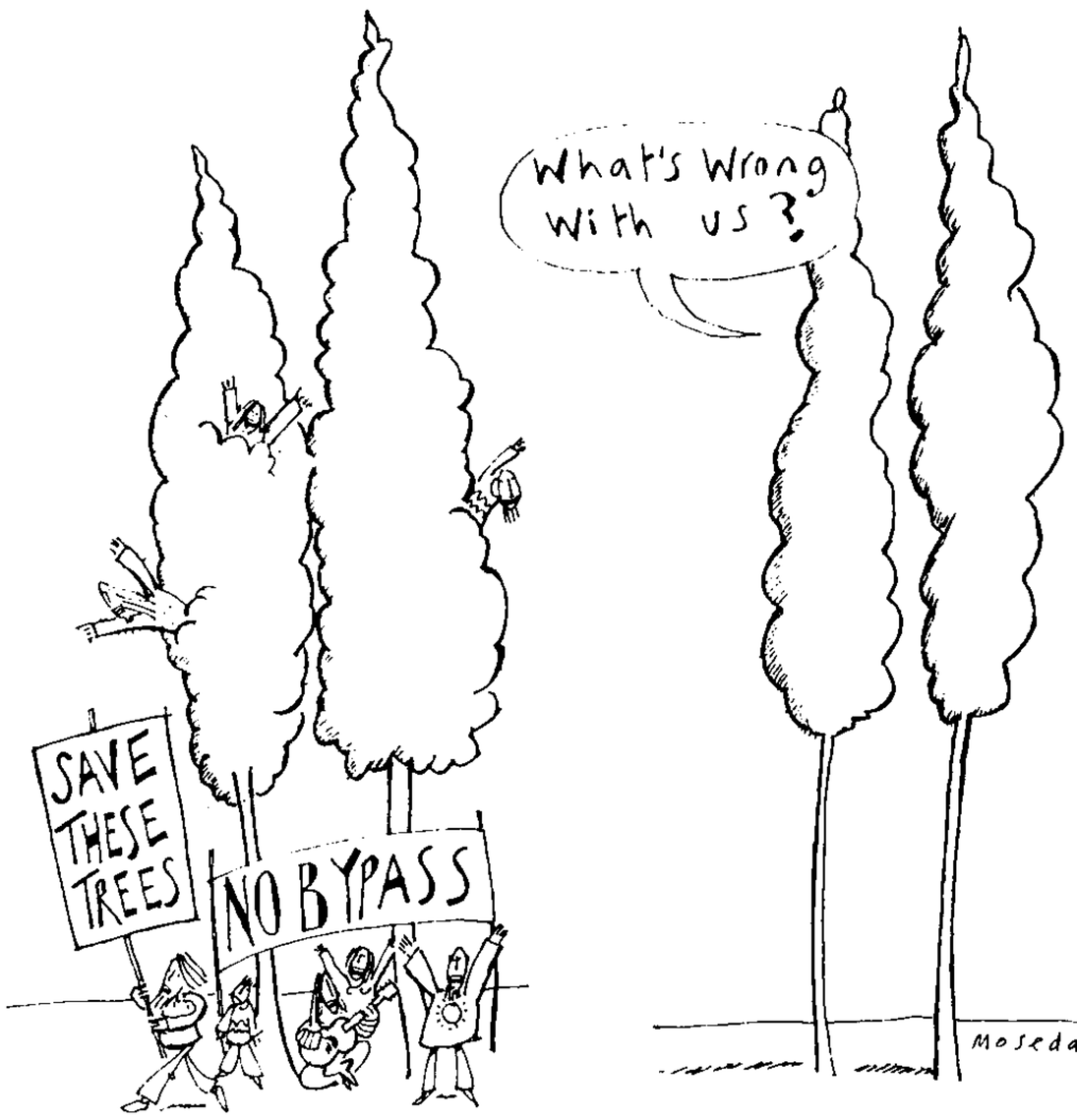
So. Farewell then
Sir Ronald Miller.

U turn if you like.
But the lady's not for
Turning.

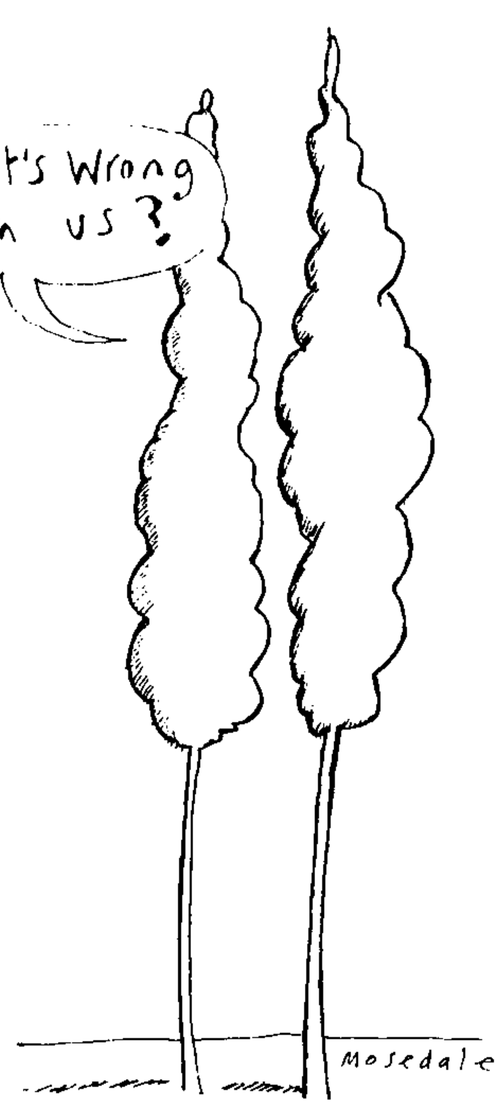
That was your joke.

Now that Mr Blair
Has come to power
U must be
Turning
In your grave.

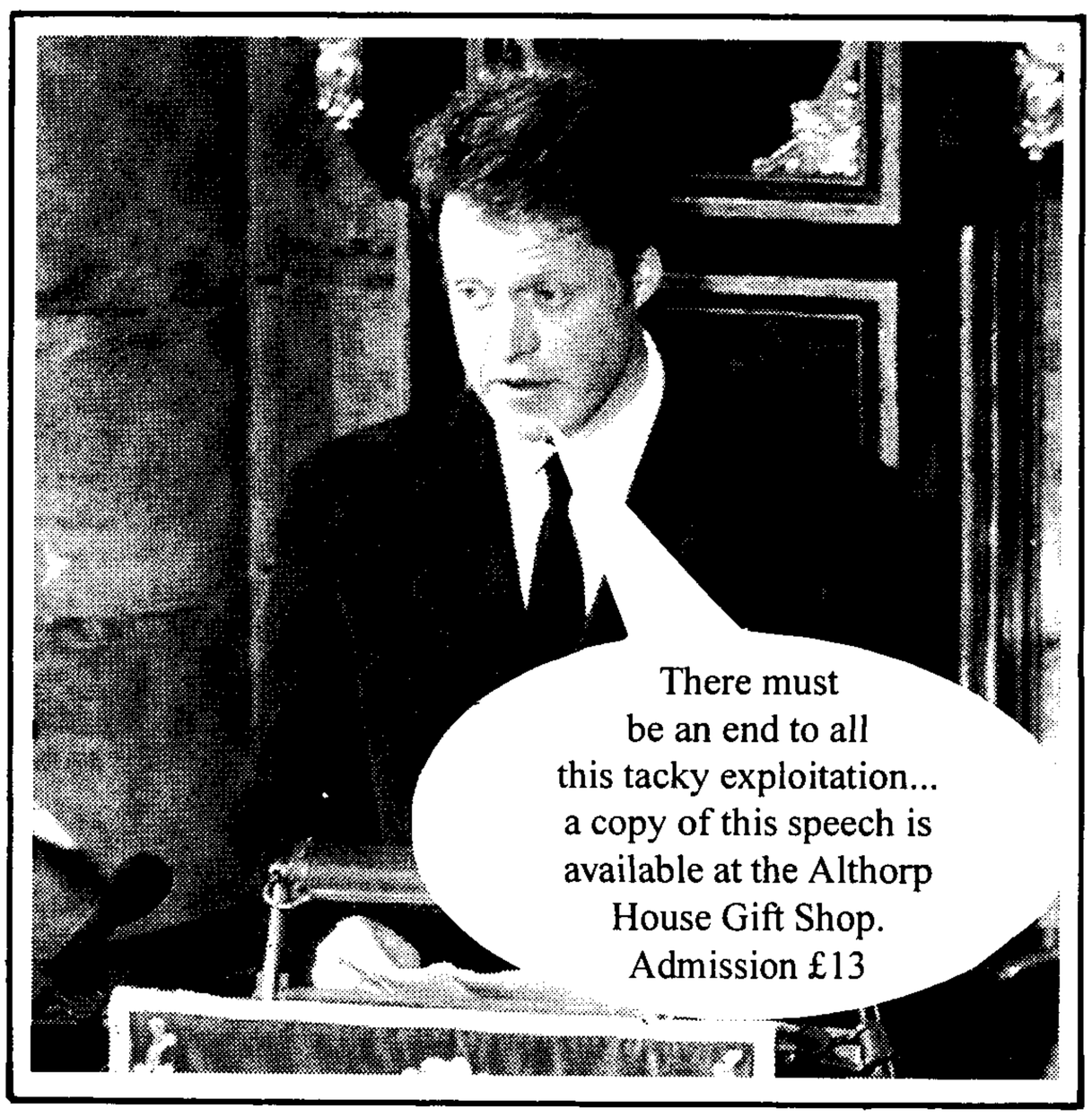
E.J. Thribb (17½)



POPLARS



UNPOPLARS


There must be an end to all this tacky exploitation... a copy of this speech is available at the Althorp House Gift Shop. Admission £13

SWEDE NAMED AS LONDON ARTS SUPREMO

by Our Arts Correspondent **Tony Bankside**

A SWEDE has been appointed to run the prestigious, £4 billion new Museum of Modern Garbage in an old power station in the heart of London's no-man's-land.

It is believed to be the first time a root vegetable has been given a major role in the arts in Britain.

Turnip Prize

The Swede, weighing 3.75 kilograms, will work under Sir Nicholas Arsota, the £850,000 a year director of the Tat Gallery, who is a close friend of Prince Charles.

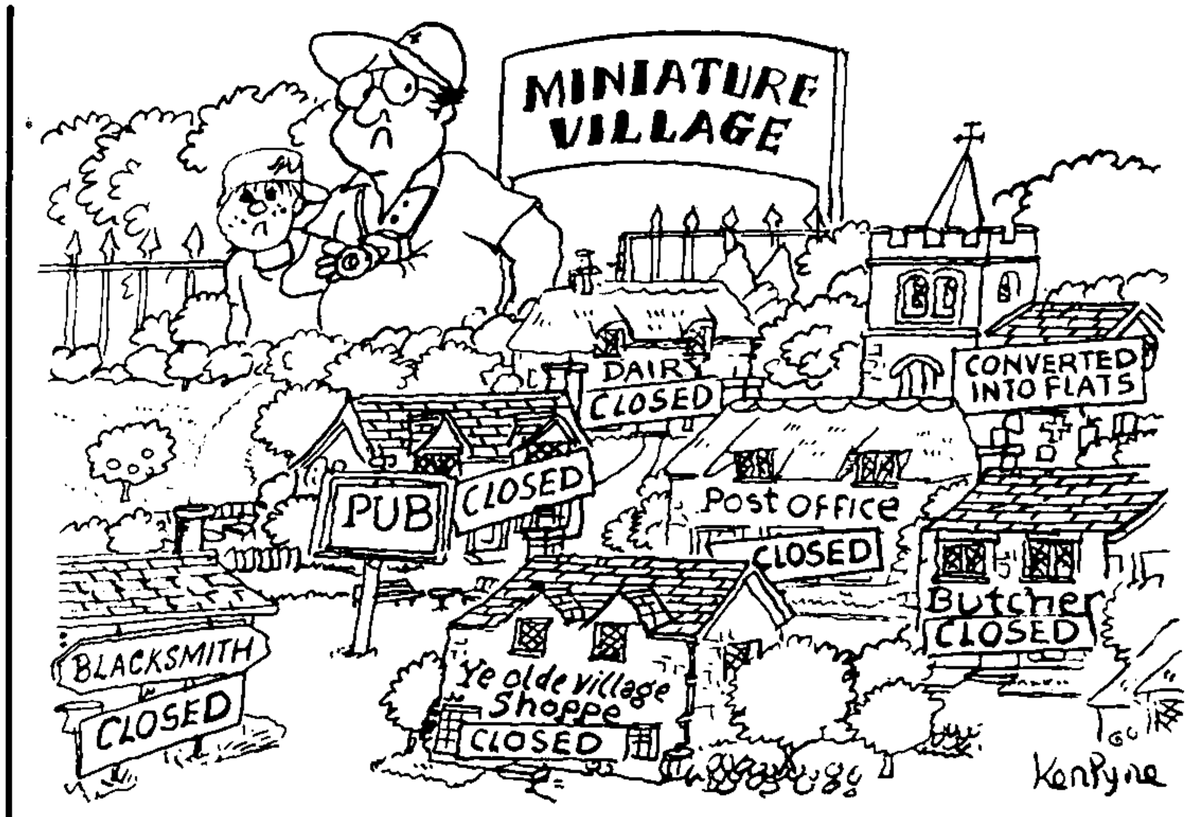
Last night Sir Nicholas described the Swede's appointment as "a tremendously exciting innovation which puts London right at the cutting edge of the vegetable slicer" *(surely 'world arts scene'? Ed.)*.

How To Get There

Tube to London Bridge (Jubilee extension on Northern, Kings X branch) or 294 bus to Southwark High Street. Then on foot to taxi rank at New Cross. From there the gallery is only a short mini-cab ride, which should not cost more than £10.

What You Will See

Pile of bricks. Pile of old medicine bottles. Pile of used vehicle tyres. Dead sheep.



Thursday April 9th

Nick Hornby

reading from and singing his new novel

About A Boy

Owl Bookshop advertisement in Hampstead & Highgate Express

11.45 / Comedia

Hot to trot. Estados Unidos, 1988 (92 minutos). Director: Michael Dinner.

Unidentified Spanish newspaper

FRIDAY, 8th MAY.— Roxburgh Singers present Mandelssohn's Elijah at Kelso Old Parish Church at 7.30pm.

Southern Reporter

BLAIR DEFENDS 'WASTE' DUMPING IN SCOTLAND

by Our Environmental Staff
Guy Gercounter

THE Prime Minister denied that there had been any "secret deal" to deposit environmentally damaging material at the Dounreay Reprocessing Plant in Scotland.

A spokesman from Number 10 Downing Street said "This is very low grade stuff and the quantities are tiny in global terms. We are only disposing of a million unsold copies of Punch magazine. There are billions more out there."

Half-Shelf-Life

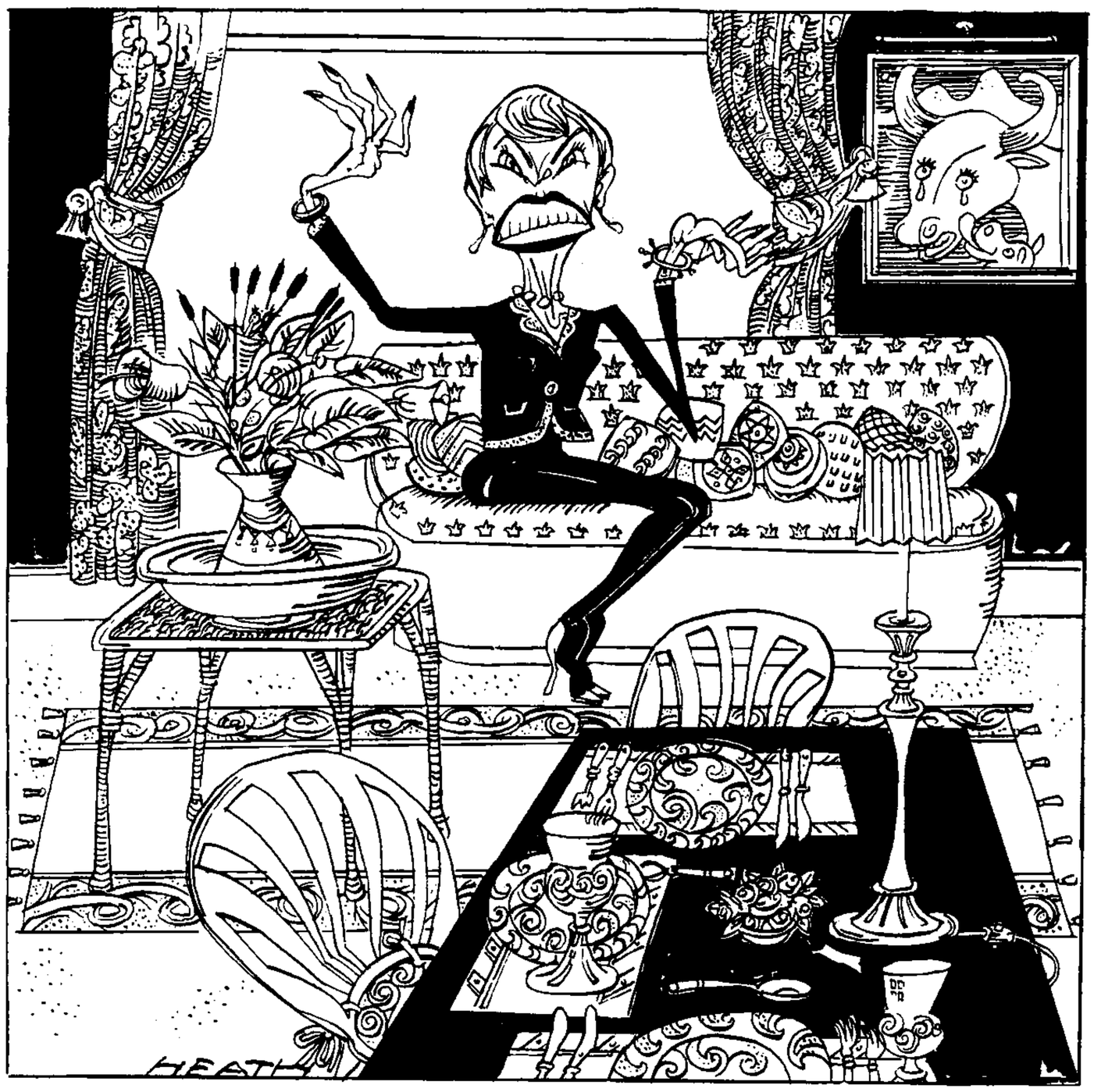
Environmentalists, however, were not convinced by this explanation. "I don't buy it," said a Greenpeace spokesman, "but then nor does anyone else. That is why there is so much unprocessed Punch matter left to destroy."

Scottish Nationalists were also outraged, "Why should Scotland be the dumping ground for this useless rubbish? Why can't they find another location to bury it? Like underneath the Independent on the news-stands at Smiths. No one will ever know it is there."

Mr Al-Fayed is extremely toxic.

Harry Enfield's **Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath** **No. 35 Interior Design**

"I've just done the house from head to toe my friends say I've a flair for it I ought to take it up professionally but I'm my own hardest task master something wasn't right then I got Fa Kyu in to Feng Shui it & I've got everything wrong no wonder I wasn't sleeping well I'd put the bed bang in the middle of the bad energy which comes in the bedroom window crosses the room & shoots up the fireplace & the new Smallbone kitchen had to go because it was almost in the shape of a horse shoe & was enclosing my energy & crushing my culinary skills & I could never relax on the sofa in the drawing room because it was facing the inglenook when it should have been facing East it's much better now & I don't think it matters that it blocks the front door although it's still not very comfy Tara Farabell says I ought to get it Astro-punctured apparently the comfort of upholstered furniture is dependent on what Star sign it was manufactured under & whether it clashes with your own & this lady comes round & for only five hundred quid she brings your star sign into harmony with your furniture by strategically placing needles in the appropriate cushions..."



McKNACKER REFUSES TO QUIT

by Our Crime Staff **Pete O'File**

TOP Scottish policeman Inspector McKnacker defied the secretary of state for Scotland by refusing to resign.

Donald Dewar had earlier called for McKnacker to "pack his bags" at once for failing to solve any of the crimes in his district for the last ten years.

Unfair Cop

McKnacker, however, was adamant that he would stay on.

"I may have been negligent and incompetent," he admitted last night, "and it is true that I did not notice a number of serious offences including murder which unfortunately occurred in the Neasdonian region."

He continued, "But I know who is responsible for this disgraceful mockery of justice. It is Donald Dewar. He has failed to act for over a year. All the clues were there for him to spot and there was no shortage of evidence that I am useless. It is an absolute crime. But what did Dewar do? Nothing until it was too late."

McKnacker concluded, "There is no doubt that Dewar must go. And the sooner the better. For the safety of the people of Scotland."

Inspector McKnacker is retiring due to ill-health later this year after contracting Ugandan flu from a young married woman in a wood during the course of his duties.

All Change In Top People's List

by Our Sunday Times Staff
Billy Yonair

THE LIST of Britain's 1,000 Most Boring People, published annually by the Sunday Times, reflects radical changes in the social structure of British boredom.

Major land-owning bores who have dominated the list in past years, such as the Duke of Westminster, the Duke of Devonshire and the Earl of Onslow, have given way to a new generation of self-made bores, such as Terence Conran (127), Richard Branson (34) and Sir John Harvey Jones (17).

There were more bores than ever from the world of entertainment, including Lord Puttnam (41), Lloyd Lord-Webber (14), Sir David Frost (8) and Mr Chris Evans (6).

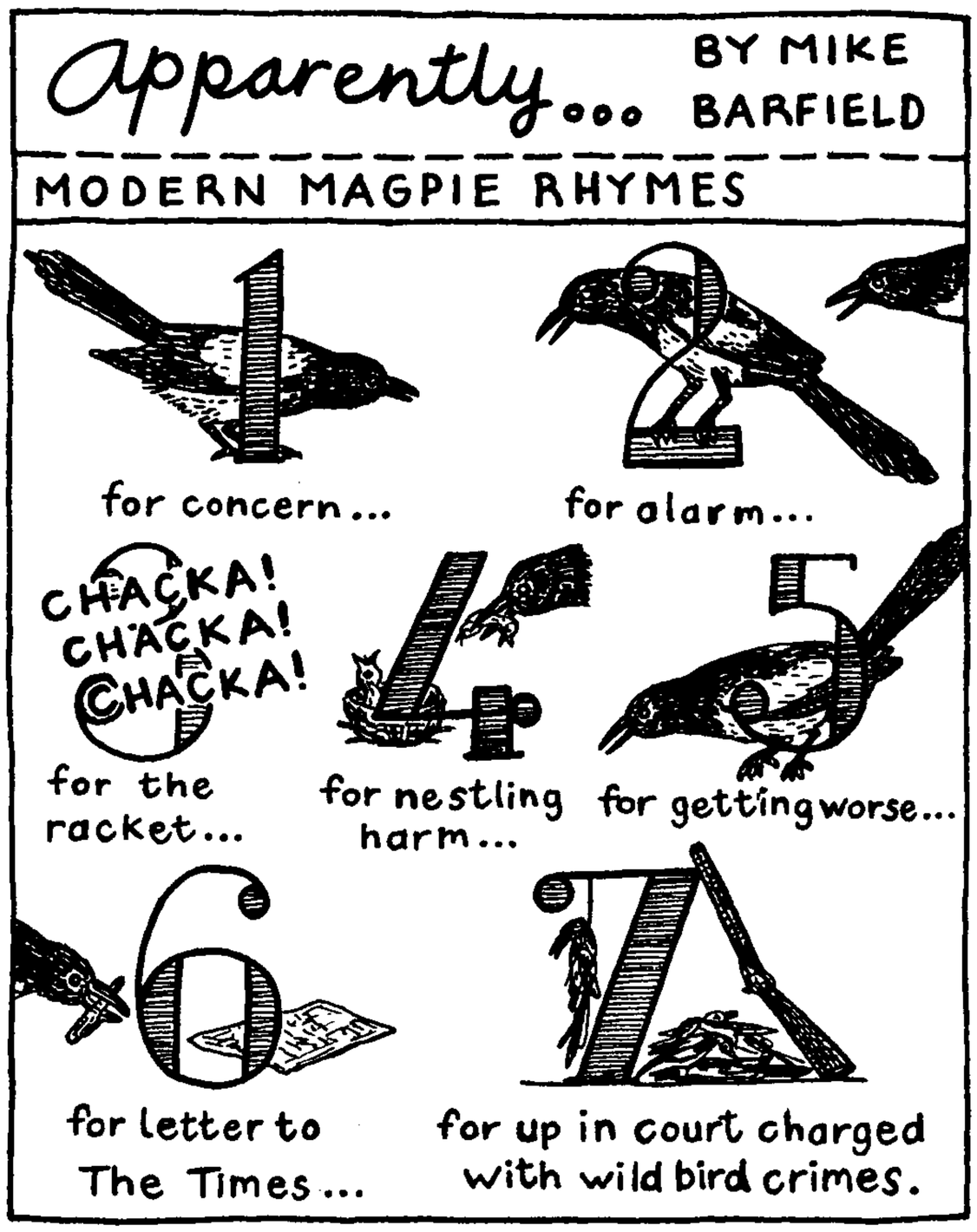
A record number of women also made the list for the first time, led by Radio Four's Sue McGhastly (11), journalist Anne Applebaum (21), Baroness Blackstone (18) and the Spice Girls (nos 1-5).

There are still relatively few members of the ethnic communities in the top 1,000, but this year the Asian population were represented by Hanif Kureishi (25), Dr Raj Persaud (52), Imran Khan (75), Ismail Merchant (107) and Salman Rushdie (19), a reclusive figure who is rarely seen in public except on television every night.

Mr Trevor Macdonald was the only *(That's enough bores. Ed.)*

Important Note

☐ **Mr Rupert Murdoch is *not* included in the Sunday Times list of the top 1,000 bores because most of his boredom is concentrated overseas. He has not been omitted on the grounds that we would be sacked if we put him on the list.** *Peter Stothard (94)*



SUPERMODELS

KERBER

DESIGNER ROBBERIES ARE ON THE INCREASE:
SO IT'S ALL PLANNED THEN... WHEN WE GET TO THE WAREHOUSE, GRAB THE ENTIRE COLLECTION.
ANY QUESTIONS?
YEH... THE BALACLAVA WITH THE POLO NECK? OR MAYBE SOMETHING MORE 'THIS SEASON'?
HMMM... AND THE GUN — WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?.. ...MEAN AND MOODY?..... OR JUST SEDUCTIVELY DANGEROUS...

St Fatima's (formerly St Cakes)

Ramadan Term begins today. There are 3,000 girls in the school and no boys on pain of death. Miss A.I.R. Nazim (Atallahs) is Head of Fatwah. Miss J.L.P. Makhtoum (Fayeds) is Mosque Prefect. The Ayatollah Khomeini becomes Chief Muezzin in place of Rev R.J. Paedophile-Raven (O.C.) as Head of Religious Studies. He also replaces the rest of staff. Public executions will take place on the Headmaster's lawn on May 25th. St Fatima's Day will be celebrated on June 5th, the Guest Speaker will be Mr Yusef Islaam (formerly Sir Catswell Steven S. O.C.). There will be no performances of any kind during the term. Yashmaks are on July 7th.

● *St Fatima's is the premier independent Islamic girls boarding school in the Middle East (formerly the East Midlands).*

Literary Review

Thou shalt not buy...

The Eleventh Commandment
Jeffrey Archer
(HarperCollins, £16.99)

PRINTED across the front of this book are the words: "The Number One Bestseller". This was done well before it had been published. But never mind. The world of Jeffrey Archer is, as we all now know, a world of fantasy, fibs and fiddles, not facts.

There are some dummies who still believe that Archer must have some talent as a thriller manufacturer, just because the product sells. But that's not because the books are any good, on any level at all. They sell simply because Archer so relentlessly promotes himself. They are bought mainly by people who at the point of purchase can't remember the name of any other living novelist at all, not even that one who writes about lawyers.

After 10 novels Jeffrey Archer has learnt so little that his books would not even be published were it not for his fame. But it must be admitted that he is a brilliant salesman. The sheer shoddiness of the goods he is managing to flog proves it.

Archer has the Teflon-skin, the hamminess and the inhuman persistence of a truly great door-to-door man. A man who has managed to overcome the embarrassments of Archer's career — all those near-crimes and "misunderstandings" so lovingly detailed recently by Paul Foot in the *Standard* — is not going to be bothered by not being able to write. Any more than he was bothered by not having really been to Wellington or to Oxford or to an American university or all the rest of it.

The Eleventh Commandment, though, it is still worth emphasising, is drivel, even by Archer's own peerlessly drivelling standards. Connor Fitzgerald, a veteran CIA man, has assassinated a Colombian politician, not realising that the US president has not been told about this covert operation. When the president discovers, the horrid head of the CIA, a career woman, decides to ditch poor Connor. So she tricks him into going on a last mission to Russia, telling him he has to assassinate the Communist thug who looks likely to take over now Yeltsin's keeled over. But really she plans to get poor Connor caught and executed, the nasty slapper.

But Connor has a guardian angel, an old pal, whose life he saved in Vietnam, now only too happy to give his own in return. In a fantastically garbagey bit of plotting, Old Pal actually takes Connor's place on the scaffold at the very last minute. As one does.

Then Connor comes back to the States for more absurd adventures, this time in the company of the Russian Mafia. While attempting to assassinate the Russian leader for real this time, he is shot dead, for real this time. Or so it seems. But in reality... And so it clunks on. Reappearing on the last page, Connor explains the final plot twist with this lovely line of dialogue: "Unfortunately, although Presidents can fix almost anything, once they've killed you off you have no choice but to disappear for a while and take on another identity." Try saying it at home. Go on.

Once more the only real interest of the novel is the light it casts on what may, for convenience, be termed the mind of Jeffrey Archer. On that subject it makes several matters plain. He is still obsessively excited by the idea of power. Simply having minions say, "Mr President" over and over again, even in fiction, thrills him to bits. It seems unlikely many readers share this tragic fever.

Then there is his delusion that the route to success in life consists of a lot of silly tricks: changes of identity, forgeries, traps and set ups, corruption, threats, and so forth. All thriller writers indulge this fantasy. Archer believes it. Reading one of his novels makes it suddenly explicable how he could have thought it a good idea to put all his money into such an obvious scam as Aquablast; have given £2,000 to a prostitute he had never met; have bought Anglia shares when his wife was on the board...

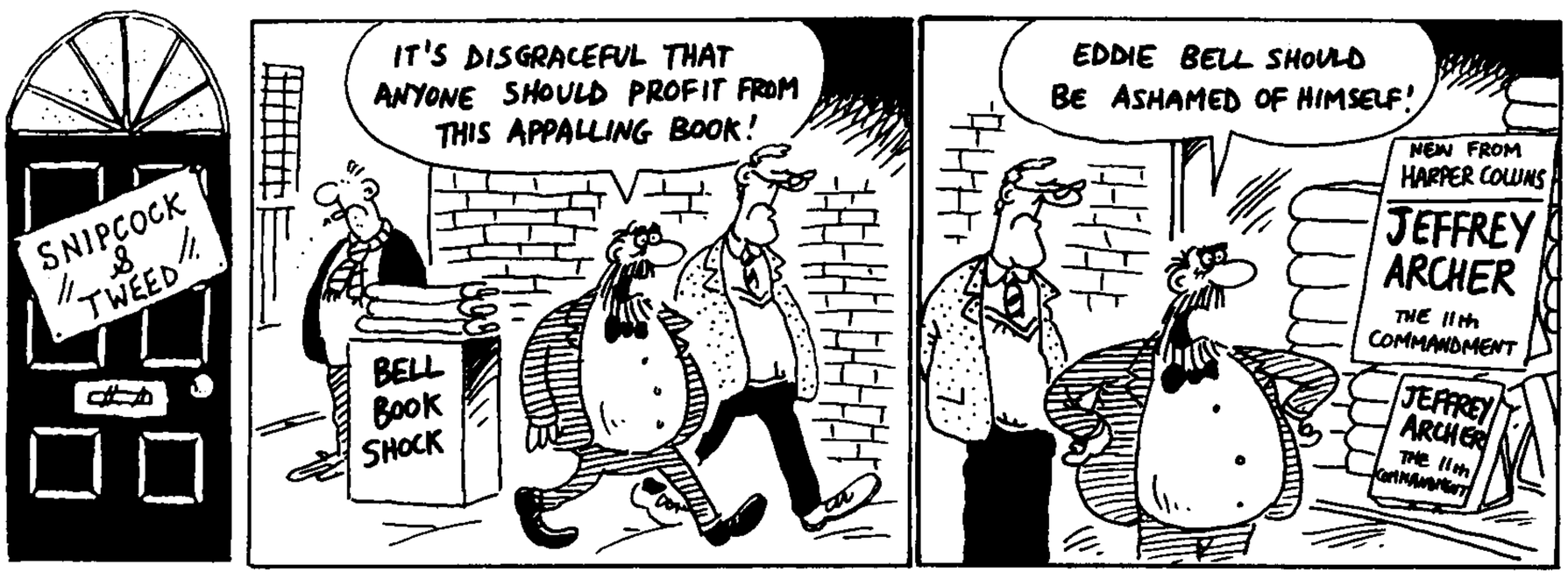
His very narrative style — a kind of moronic enthusiasm for implausible schemes — displays that simplemindedness which is

the necessary reverse of his deceitfulness. On the one hand, Archer's career has indeed been highly deceptive; on the other, only a cretin could have expected to get away with some of the things he has done.

The novel demonstrates that he can only conceive of other people as ludicrous stereotypes, just as he has done in his own life. The fiction in his books and the fiction in his life are of a piece: crappy. Here the hero's father is described as an incorruptible hero, "dedicated to the cause of law and order", a man "who stood whenever a woman entered the room". Similarly, Archer pathetically portrayed his own father as a colonel in the Somerset Light Infantry who had won the Distinguished Conduct Medal. He was not. In reality he was, as Foot says, a bigamist, a con-man and a forger.

Connor the hero, at his phoney funeral, is acclaimed as "Sportsman, soldier, professional, lover, father, friend, and for me — although I would never have had the courage to mention it in his presence, simply because he would have laughed at me — hero." With a shiver, you realise this is precisely how Archer thinks of himself in fantasy.

Archer's current fantasy is, of course, to become mayor of London. *The Eleventh Commandment* (which is "thou shalt not be caught", a little late for Jeffrey) is published on May 1, in time for the referendum on the proposal on the 7th. For this reason alone, Connor is given an overnight stop in London so he can pick up a paper to read about the election. "That's odd, thought Connor: haven't they always had a Mayor — what about Dick Whittington? He looked at the photographs of the contenders and their names, but they meant nothing to him. One of them would be running England's capital in a couple of weeks' time. He wondered where he would be then." Hint, bloody hint. Thank God, we don't have to take it.


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
IT'S DISGRACEFUL THAT ANYONE SHOULD PROFIT FROM THIS APPALLING BOOK!
BELL BOOK SHOCK
EDDIE BELL SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF HIMSELF!
NEW FROM HARPER COLLINS
JEFFREY ARCHER
THE 11th COMMANDMENT
JEFFREY ARCHER
THE 11th COMMANDMENT

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ FOR the past six years Sara Keays has been prevented from publishing her memoirs, thanks to a draconian "Mary Bell Order" imposed by the high court in 1993.

Her only crime, if one can call it that, was to have a child whose father happened to be Cecil Parkinson. Nevertheless, the media are officially banned from "the publication of any information, in whatever form" about Flora Keays and her mother, and the official solicitor has devoted much time and energy to persecuting Sara Keays whenever she threatens to go public.

Now the child-killer after whom the order was named is telling her own story (for a hefty fee), to be published by Macmillan and serialised in the *Times*. So far, however, there hasn't been a murmur of protest from the official solicitor, let alone a legal challenge.

Is it OK, then, for murderers to profit from their notoriety — but wholly unacceptable for the ex-mistresses of Tory politicians? Perhaps the official solicitor will enlighten us.

■ US bookselling giant Barnes & Noble's ambition to set up in the UK has come at the perfect time for Ottakars, which has just launched on the stock exchange.

James Heneage, md of the bookshop chain, was careful not to deny he had been talking to Barnes & Noble, thus helping boost Ottakars' shares by more than 30 percent on the first day of trading. Now Heneage, with a company valued at more than £40m, is sitting very prettily whatever he decides to do.

■ **THERE has been no explanation why Orion was the only large publisher not to provide cash support for World Book Day. But it is hard to imagine Orion boss Anthony Cheetham feeling generously disposed towards a project driven by Gail Rebuck, whom he believes betrayed him during manoeuvrings at Random House which resulted in his being ousted and her taking over as chief executive.**

'Bookworm'

LIBRARY NEWS

NEWS from the Corporation of London, where the Guildhall librarian is issuing more edicts on "expenditure reductions".

Since campaigners have halted the one-day-a-week closure of Shoe Lane and Camomile Street libraries, managers say they must find £68,000 worth of savings elsewhere.

The lending libraries book fund will lose £20,000, and £22,000 will go from the reference libraries fund. Conservation budgets, uniform, furniture, printing and office expenses will all be slashed too. While the £68,000 is clawed back from the libraries' budget, a report recently revealed that the Corporation of London has assets worth £1,000m.

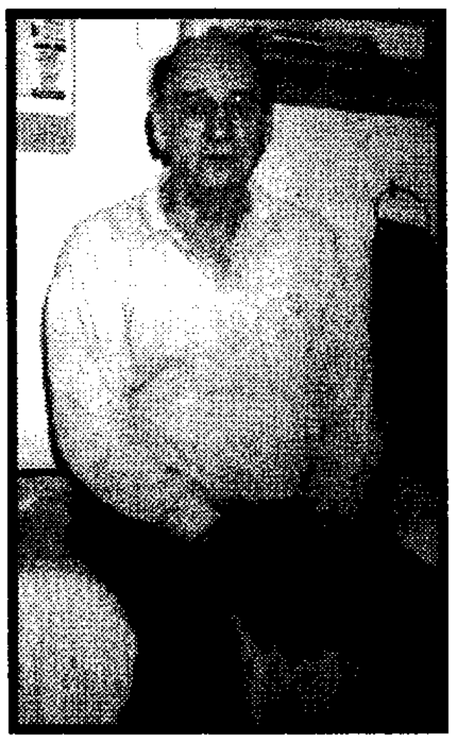
footnotes

MURDERED SHE WASN'T

WE ARE used to people being imprisoned for crimes they did not commit. Now, from Sussex, comes news of a man who was imprisoned for 23 years... for a crime which never took place.

The man is Patrick Nicholls, 69, who was convicted in 1975 of the murder in Worthing of an old lady called Gladys Heath. When Mrs Heath's body was first examined by home office pathologist Dr Hugh Johnson, he concluded that she had died of natural causes.

The policeman in charge of crime in the Worthing area, Det Supt Laurie Finlay, cut short a holiday to investigate Mrs Heath's death. He was reassured by Mr Johnson that the old lady had died from a natural heart attack. Johnson's opinion was recorded on video. Satisfied that there was nothing suspicious about the death, Mr Finlay resumed his holiday and the case passed to another Sussex police officer, Det Inspector Gordon Harrison.



FREE AT LAST: Patrick Nicholls

When Mr Finlay returned from holiday he was surprised to hear that the pathologist had changed his mind and concluded that Mrs Heath's heart attack had been caused by violence. Patrick Nicholls, who had visited her that day, was charged with her murder. Crucial evidence against Mr Nicholls came from Jack Boorer, who told Lewes crown court that Nicholls had confessed to the old lady's murder. The video of the pathologist's first opinion was not shown to the court. Mr Nicholls was convicted and jailed for life.

As his long sentence unwound, Mr Nicholls's conviction was challenged over and over again. Supt Finlay protested at the way the police inquiry had developed, and resigned from the force in disgust. The *Daily Express* revealed that Boorer was a police informer and published Mr Boorer's complete retraction of his evidence.

In 1991 William Thompson, a criminology lecturer at Reading University, published a dossier entitled *Beyond Belief: A Catalogue of Deception: The Case of Patrick David Nicholls*. The dossier was reported at length in *Eye* 775 on 30 August 1991. Despite its overwhelming arguments, and despite consulting at least 12 solicitors over 20 years, Mr Nicholls could not persuade the home office to reopen his case.

Two years ago he approached new solicitors in Southampton who again petitioned for the case to be reopened. The case was passed to the criminal cases review commission, which got another forensic report on the various post-mortem examinations in 1975. The new report made nonsense of the prosecution evidence at Mr Nicholls's trial, and suggested that the old lady had, after all, died a natural death. The commission referred the case to the court of appeal. At a hearing before the full court, presided over by Lord Justice Rose, the crown prosecution service (CPS) indicated that it would not be contesting the referred appeal. Then, on 28 February, without any warning Nicholls was told to pack his bags and was bundled out of Albany prison in the Isle of Wight. He had just suffered a stroke. No accommodation was made available for him, and he has been staying ever since in north London with Paddy Joe Hill, one of the wrongly-convicted Birmingham Six.

Mr Nicholls relies on £70 a week benefit. He is on bail pending his full appeal, which will be heard some time late in May and is scheduled to last for one hour. Its outcome is not in doubt: another grotesque miscarriage of justice. Patrick Nicholls tells the *Eye* that his "tariff" — the time set for his life sentence — was 13 years "I served 23 because I refused to say I was guilty" he says.

A strange feature of the Nicholls case is its similarity to that of the former Northern Ireland army information officer, Colin Wallace, whose close friend Jonathan Lewis was found drowned in the river Arun in August 1980. The first post-mortem examination, carried out by home office pathologist Ian West, found no suspicious circumstances and a police press release said so. Inspector Gordon Harrison took charge of the case. A few days later, Dr West carried out another examination which concluded that Lewis had died a violent death. Colin Wallace was charged with murder and convicted of manslaughter at Lewes crown court in 1981. He spent six years in prison. When he was released he devoted much of his life to proving his innocence. New forensic reports made nonsense of Dr West's evidence for the prosecution. In October 1996, Wallace's appeal was upheld and his conviction quashed.

Briefs encounter

■ **WHEN the *Eye* pointed out that Edmund Lawson QC, counsel to the inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence, had spent much of his life representing police officers, the authorities united to assure us that Mr Lawson would conduct the inquiry in an entirely impartial way.**

The choice of barristers to the inquiry emphasises the distance between Mr Lawson and the police. Mr Lawson's chambers are at 9-12 Bell Yard. The three detective superintendents involved in the Lawrence case are being represented by Sonia Woodley QC and her junior Peter Doyle, whose chambers are at 9-12 Bell Yard. The Police Federation is represented by Michael Egan and Richard Jory, whose chambers are at 9-12 Bell Yard; and Det Supt Barker, who led the first investigation into the handling of the Stephen Lawrence murder, is represented by Mukal Chawla, whose chambers are at — well, see if you can guess where.

Derry's Balls

SHEILA THOMPSON was one of the last of a rare species: a government press officer who tells the truth whether it helps the government or not.

She did so, moreover, with good humour, often even with a wry confession that all was not always perfect in the lord chancellor's department. Since taking up her post as head of information there in 1990, she has fielded endless truculent questions from the *Eye*, usually about the serial injustices of the last eight years. She tried to be fair with journalists and, as a result, journalists tried to be fair with her and her department.

SHEILA THOMPSON

Such a person is entirely redundant in the press offices of New Labour, where information is regarded as irrelevant unless it assists ministerial spin.

For most of her time since New Labour was elected, Sheila Thompson has had to deal with the arrogant and bovine behaviour of the new lord chancellor, Lord Irvine, and his wallpaper. He has had a rotten press and thoroughly deserved it. It would never occur to him to blame himself, so he blamed his press officer and made it clear she had to go. Her replacement, Allan Percival, comes from the prime minister's office and was once spin doctor to the Prince of Wales.

High Principals

SHACKLETON BUMMER

■ **WHEN the editor of the *Wirral Globe* predicted last year that Jenny Shackleton, thrusting New Labour principal of Wirral Metropolitan College, would follow the closure of one college site (at Wallasey) by closing another (Carlett Park College), she threatened to take him to the press complaints commission.**

Lucky she didn't: Shackleton has indeed now announced the closure of Carlett Park.

In doing so she has united the Tory and Labour parties on Wirral council. Only the Lib Dems, who always put education first, support her. Even more remarkably, she has made a radical out of Ben Chapman, who was chosen by New Labour as its candidate in the Wirral by-election last year largely because he had no past association of any kind with either the Labour party or Labour politics.

Chapman is now campaigning hard against Shackleton's closures. He cannot win because Shackleton is a real New Labour favourite and sits on David Blunkett's crack education and training taskforce. If Labour want to shut Chapman up, it will have to give him a job in the government. This worked a treat when Shackleton closed the Wallasey site. Angela Eagle, Labour MP for Wallasey, a heroic campaigner against the closure, was given a junior ministerial post and soon fell silent.

GIVE US BACK OUR PENSION MONEY: Reg Mayes (left) and David Laws

National Greed plc

THE hot war between companies advised by wealthy pensions lawyers and the pensions ombudsman, whose services are provided free, is coming nicely to the boil in the case of the Electricity Supply Pensions Scheme.

The scheme is worth around £16bn — a vast sum when you consider the government only got £12bn in 1990 for flogging off the entire electricity industry. Two pensioners who used to work for the National Grid, Dave Laws and Reg Mayes, complained to the pensions ombudsman, Dr Julian Farrand, about the attitude of the new privatised electricity companies to the £1bn surplus in their funds.

The electricity companies allocated at least 70 percent of the surplus for their own use, and up to 30 percent for improving pensioners' benefits. This 70-30 split, they explained, was based on the fact that the employers had contributed about 70 percent to the fund *and the workers 30* percent. Any surplus, their lawyers argued, should be divided between the companies and pensioners on this basis.

This perfect symmetry overlooked the fact that the new privatised companies had paid little or nothing into the scheme: most of the massive fund had been contributed by the old nationalised companies.

Dr Farrand rejected the companies' argument. These pension funds are for paying pensions, he insisted, and the money in them can only be used for that purpose. Any other use of the surpluses by the company is a breach of the trustees' duty.

Appalled at the prospect of huge piles of money slipping out of their reach, the companies took the case to the high court. To their enormous relief Mr Justice Robert Walker came down on their side. Urged on by massed ranks of company lawyers, he said the ombudsman was wrong and that the companies could use the surplus for their own purposes.

Mr Justice Walker added a curious postscript to his judgment. "Any general exclusion of employers from surplus would tend to make employers very reluctant to contribute to their pension schemes more than the bare minimum that they could get away with... It would be even more unfortunate if employers were driven to abandon final salary schemes and were to turn instead to money-purchase schemes which may in the longterm prove less advantageous to the beneficiaries."

In other words, unless the law supported the companies in their avaricious claims on pension fund surpluses, the companies might sulk and cut contributions. The Walker judgment is questionable at several levels and will be bitterly contested later this year at the court of appeal.

While the companies were salivating over the pot of gold the judge had placed at their disposal, however, they were plagued by another awkward little problem. Before the surplus issue had been decided, they owed £115m to the scheme which they had used to pay enhanced early pensions to older workers whom they wanted to get rid of. After taking legal advice they decided to put off paying what they owed and to pay it by instalments at intervals which suited them. As a result, the scheme's 1997 accounts were qualified.

Still backed by their lawyers, the companies decided to go on deferring payment of their debts. They were shaken out of their complacency, however, by a letter from the new pensions regulator OPRA in February, telling them they were in breach of the law and had better pay back everything they owed by 31 March.

Most of the companies reluctantly complied. But not all. A spokesman for the Electricity Association told the *Eye* that one company had not met the deadline. Which one? The spokesman replied: "I don't know, and if I did I would not tell you." Thanks to this mysterious defaulter, the scheme's accounts are likely to be qualified for a second year running.

Save the Wales!

■ **SENSATIONAL revelations that New "green" Labour has been encouraging the governments of the United States and Georgia to dump deadly nuclear waste in Scotland have smothered any publicity for another huge DPB (Dumping Poisons in Britain) operation.**

For many years farms and government depots in Kwazulu-Natal and Northern Province, South Africa, have been littered with drums of DDT, dieldrin and other exceedingly dangerous pesticides. Government control of the use of these pesticides has been slack, perhaps because the people most likely to be poisoned are black labourers.

In 1994, for instance, 34 women farmworkers were poisoned by pesticide spray in an adjoining orchard. Such spraying would be wholly illegal in Britain. Farmworkers have been regularly used in South African fields as human markers for crop-spraying with pesticides — a practice universally banned in the US and Europe. DDT has been found in the blood and milk of lactating mothers working on farms. The DDT levels have caused a cluster of cancers in these women and damaged their ability to give birth.

New South Africa has therefore engaged in an 8.8m rand exercise to export all these toxic chemicals to New Britain by the end of the year. Already hundreds of containers have been shipped off to South Wales to be incinerated by the waste disposal company Rechem. The news is unlikely to cause much rejoicing around the South Wales Rechem factory where there have been prolonged protests about the plant.

North Wales Child Abuse Tribunal

NOTHING TO HYDE

■ **ALMOST the last person to give evidence at the North Wales child abuse tribunal was Jerry Hyde, a senior lawyer at the crown prosecution service (CPS).**

Mr Hyde's job was rather an easy one. The terms of reference of the tribunal, which was set up by William Hague in 1996 when he was Welsh secretary, specifically excluded investigation into a key matter: why the CPS failed to prosecute for child abuse in cases where the North Wales police had recommended prosecutions.

After a mammoth investigation into 500 complaints of abuse from children in care in North Wales, the CPS decided to prosecute in only eight cases, two of them trivial. The counsel to the current inquiry, Gerard Elias QC, described the eight as "surprisingly few".

The rate of prosecutions of police officers was especially low. North Wales police investigated allegations against four North Wales police officers — two serving, two retired. In two cases the police recommended prosecution. (One of the former officers who was *not* recommended for prosecution left the area and has recently been convicted of raping a 12-year-old girl.)

The number of police officers actually prosecuted is predictable: nil. But to the obvious relief of the CPS, Hague's terms of reference excused it from any explanation.

Astra-nomical Waste

HERE's a story about how the Treasury Solicitors' office spends your money.

In April 1993, the secretary to the Department of Trade inquiry into the bust arms company Astra recommended no action to disqualify former Astra directors.

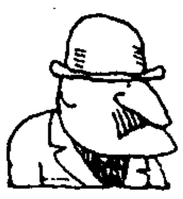
For eighteen months, former Astra chairman Gerald James annoyed the authorities with public allegations that his company had been used by British intelligence to make secret arms deals and pay secret commissions. In September 1994, the DTI decided against its own inspectors' recommendation to seek to disqualify all the Astra directors except a former MI6 officer called Stephan Kock.

Gerald James spent three years searching state documents specially disclosed for his case. He discovered that Astra's subsidiary BMARC had paid millions of pounds in commissions of which he as chairman had known nothing.

Nervous of more disclosures, the department backed off. In March they dropped half the charges, hoping the defendants would plead guilty to the rest. They didn't. On 14th April, Margaret Beckett threw in the towel and announced that "in the public interest" all the charges would be dropped.

All the defendants were on legal aid, and the government used the most expensive barristers in the country. Hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' pounds have been wasted on a silly vendetta, which, according to the government's own advice five years ago, should never have been started in the first place.

You can write to Paul Foot at Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183



In the City

ONE of the longest and most expensive fraud trials — that concerning the long ago (pre-1990) collapse of Butte Mining — was expected to end this week after 11 months and several millions.

Just what the jury made of the trial can only be guessed. However, the Butte jurors would seem ideal candidates for research into how fraud trial juries function. But that of course is still banned by those in the lord chancellor's department and the home office who claim that ignorance is bliss when it comes to deciding whether juries should be replaced in long, complex fraud extravaganzas. It is suspected what the Butte jurors' verdict would be given the choice.

The grotesquely costly British way of dealing with fraud is not confined to the length of trials. The elongated period before a trial is another cause for concern, though not by those firmly aboard the legal gravy train at a time when schools and hospitals are short of funding.

Next week (5 May) is due to see the appearance in court for sentence of likely lad Terry Ramsden, who pleaded guilty last month to hiding assets from his creditors after being made bankrupt. This case began with Ramsden's arrest soon after he had cut a nifty plea bargain deal with the Serious Farce Office in November 1993 under which he received a suspended sentence after pleading guilty to fraud charges concerning the collapse of his investment company Glen International.

Ramsden, a high-rolling gambler, outwitted the SFO last time by betting and winning that it would not fancy its chances of convicting him before a jury of his peers who were more likely to be sympathetic to Tel than to a bevy of Japanese and other bankers who lost their money. Ramsden received two years suspended. He no doubt hopes he has made a similar winning bet this time.

Ramsden was made bankrupt in 1992, by which time he was on the run. He returned voluntarily to cut his deal after spending several months awaiting extradition in California's Terminal Island prison. A stay for which he clearly received credit in his sentence for offences put down to "mistakes" after building up "an honest, impressive and phenomenally successful business".

The "honest" bankrupt Ramsden was caught when he was filmed steering his aged mum into an offshore bank to make a cash withdrawal which she then passed on to him. Subsequent City police investigations revealed a trust and assorted assets which he had hidden from creditors.

But why has it taken more than four years to bring what might seem a relatively simple matter to court? Only the SFO and Ramsden's lawyers can explain. Tel is clearly hoping to get a big discount for putting his hands up. But should he receive another suspended sentence as a two-time loser who has undoubtedly been responsible for another £1m-plus investigation and pre-trial proceedings?

By remarkable coincidence both of the SFO prosecutors who worked the Ramsden cases have moved on — Mike Drury, after the first trial to GCHQ; and now Andrew Jackson, even before the end of the second. Jackson, who ran Ramsden Two, has joined corporate gumshoes Kroll Associates as part of the steady stream of SFO defectors seeking better paid and more satisfying futures. Within the past six months the SFO has lost senior assistant directors Chris Dickson (to the accountants' joint disciplinary body) and Lorna Harris (to Brussels). They followed in the wake of Tricia Howse, now heading for the new Financial Services Authority (FSA) after the Bank of England, and Bill Waite, who went first to Kroll and then left in the mass exodus which created rivals Risk Advisory Group.

But fraudsmen everywhere have no reason to worry. The experienced prosecutors who leave are being replaced by low level lawyers often with no experience of criminal law, or by the return, after well merited and hoped for one-way secondments, of such giants of fraudbusting as "Napoleon" Fred (Levitt) Coford and the "Fat Controller" John (Maxwell) Tate. Carry On Defrauding.

SIMILAR personnel problems continue to plague the FSA, Labour's new kid on the regulatory block. There has been growing internal murmurings about the dominance of Bank of England regulators at the authority, although their experience is more in banking than securities. It is said that no BoE people who chose to make the switch to FSA have not found a home. But then the FSA chairman is Howard Davies, late of the BoE.

Internal critics suggest that former senior Securities & Futures Authority officials such as Richard Farrant (chief executive) and Vicki Fitt (a risk management expert) are not being used to best advantage in their new FSA positions in charge of operations and information technology. But it is not just SFA people who are said to be unhappy. Some at the Securities & Investments Board, FSA's precursor, are also leaving, including Guy Sears, one of its legal experts.

Clearly creating one single regulator was bound to put some noses out of joint because there could not be enough top jobs to go round. But many experienced observers query how the FSA will be able to be the City's policeman if it is losing or not fully utilising those who know most about specific areas of regulating the securities industry. They fear that with the increasing concentration of regulatory powers, which is also set to include all the financial services ombudsmen, more will most certainly mean less.

THE unexpectedly sudden return last month of former Wardley chief executive Ewan Launder to Hong Kong to face bribery charges — after the law lords again rejected his appeal — raises the interesting possibility of new revelations about Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking's role in the scandal surrounding the 1982 collapse of the Carrian property group.

After a near five-year legal fight in which Launder claimed he should not be returned to face injustice Chinese style, he may need to not only "kow-tow" for his criticisms but make ample apologies for his guilt if he is to avoid a long spell as a guest of Beijing. But will his mitigation or defence include incriminating those higher up in Hong Kong Bank who knew and approved the loans to Carrian's George Tan and his associates?

Launder is charged with being given $5m to make the loans. Those who knew how the bank worked never accepted that Launder alone could have made such loans, some unsecured, without approval from his superiors and suspected that Launder, though corrupt, was also a convenient fall guy.

But as the Chinese like to see defendants admit their guilt — as did Carrian's George Tan who was jailed for three years before last year's handover — Launder may figure that it is better to stick with the programme and say nothing other than guilty.

SWISS BANKER FAMILY ROBINSON

JUST how fanciful are some of the Sunset Times' estimates in its rich list has once again been demonstrated by this year's massive devaluation of Britain's supposed richest man, Joe Lewis.

Three years ago these supposed wealth experts announced the Bahamas-based Londoner was worth a mere £200m. Then last year they discovered he was worth more than ten times as much at a staggering £3bn! There was no factual justification for such a staggering claim, other than Lewis's supposed role as a major player in world currency markets.

But as none of this can be publicly documented, and as supposed peers such as George Soros, whose fortune does have a large disclosed element, say Joe who?, it is perhaps not surprising that this year Lewis's wealth has just as mysteriously almost halved. Now the ST experts say they were "a little too ambitious" and he is only worth a mere £1.75bn! But as there is no more evidence for this fall than for the previous rise, how can either figure be taken seriously? Lewis is a wealthy man, but a billionaire? Let's see some numbers.

'Slicker'

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1. Personal Information

Mr ❒ Mrs ❒ Miss ❒ Ms ❒

Surname:

First Name:

Address:

Post Code

I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Age: Height:

Occupation:

Religion:

Build: Slight ❒ Medium ❒ Large ❒

Attractiveness: Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

2. Education

Private / Public ❒ Grammar ❒
Comprehensive ❒ Sec. Modern ❒

O Levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒
Further Education ❒
University / Professional Equivalent ❒
Technical Qualification ❒

3. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

❒ Affectionate ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

4. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank)

❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
❒ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

5. Your interests

(sections 5. and 6. Please tick for a like, cross for dislike or leave blank for no preference.)

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Politics/History ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Astrology
❒ Science/Tech ❒ Children
❒ Cinema ❒ Homemaking
❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music ❒ Countryside

6. Details of your ideal partner

Minimum age: Maximum age:

Height: min. max. Don't mind ❒

Marital status:

Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒
Don't mind ❒

Build: Slight ❒ Medium ❒ Large ❒

Attractiveness: Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

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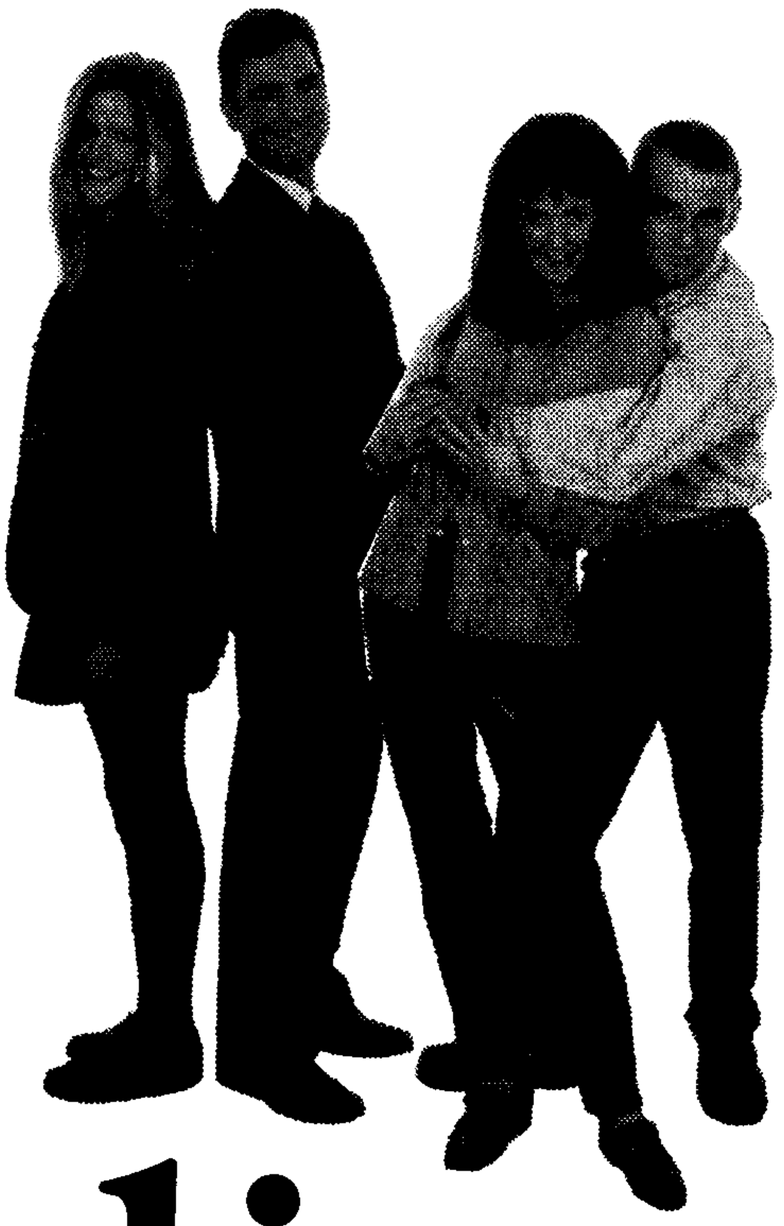

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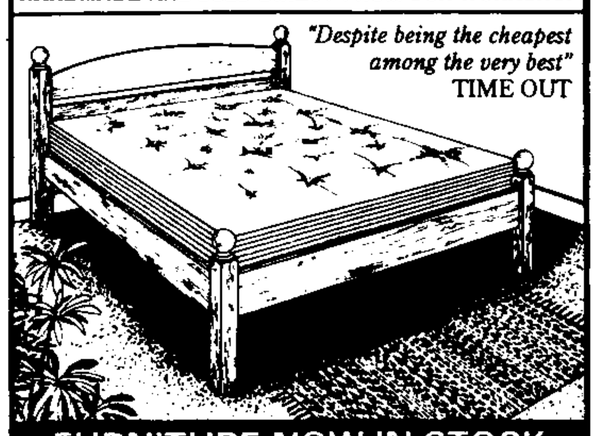

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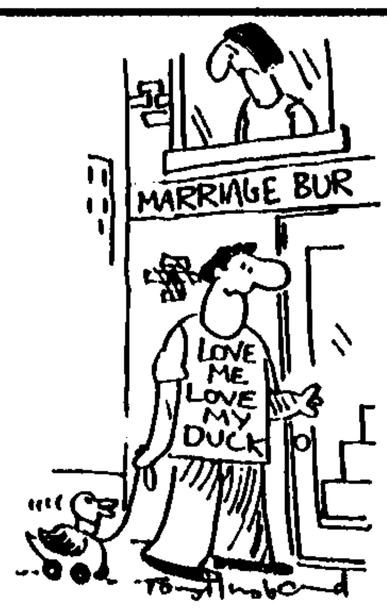

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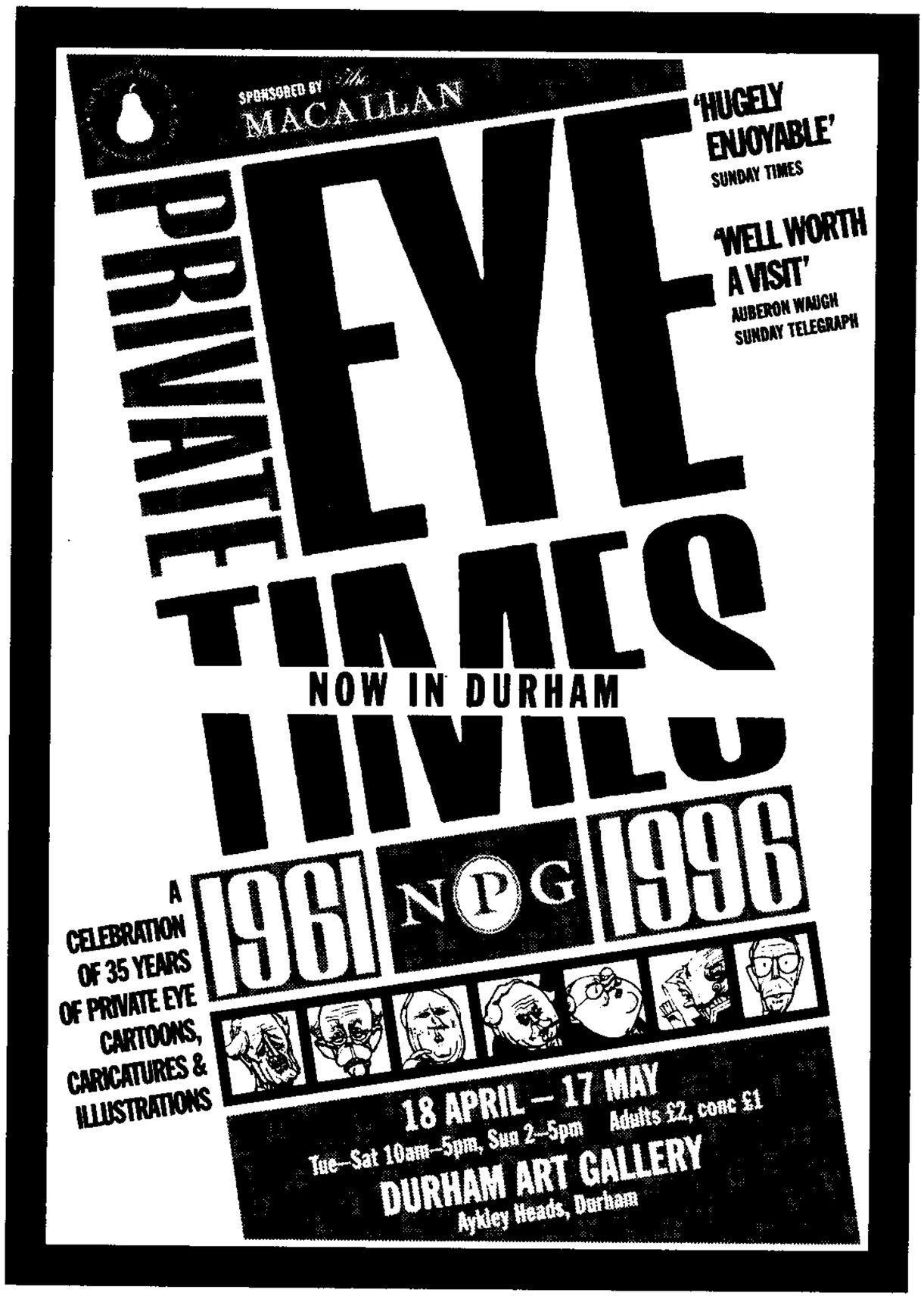

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